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# *TENNIS: LAWN TENNIS*

# *RACKETS: FIVES*

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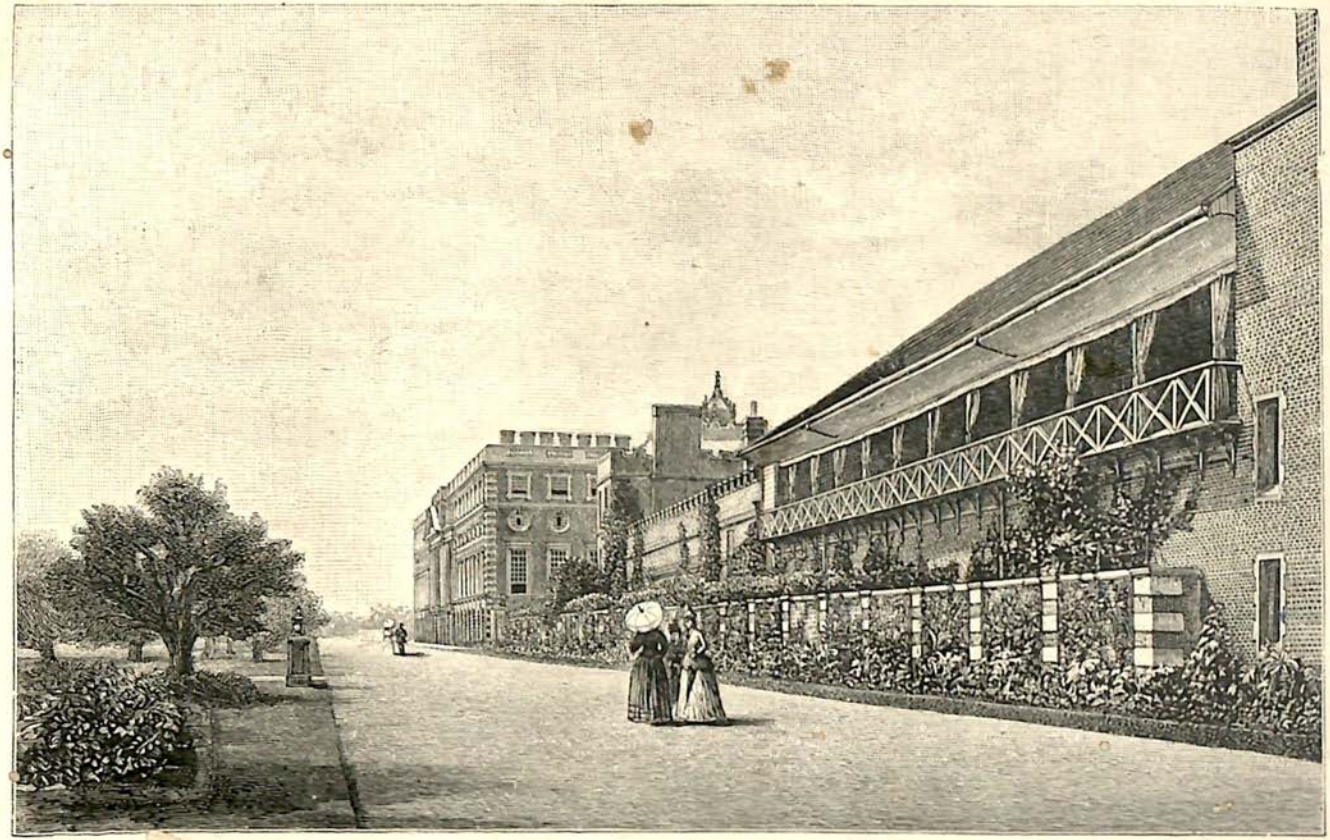

HAMPTON COURT

# TENNIS

By J. M. HEATHCOTE

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY THE HON. A. LYTTELTON AND W. C. MARSHALL

# LAWN TENNIS

By C. G. HEATHCOTE

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY MISS L. DOD, H. W. W. WILBERFORCE
H. F. LAWFORD, SPENCER W. GORE, R. D. SEARS
AND HERBERT CHIPP

## RACKETS

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# *DEDICATION*

*TO*

# *H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES*

BADMINTON: *May*, 1890.

HAVING received permission to dedicate these volumes, the BADMINTON LIBRARY of SPORTS and PASTIMES, to HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES, I do so feeling that I am dedicating them to one of the best and keenest sportsmen of our time. I can say, from personal observation, that there is no man who can extricate himself from a bustling and pushing crowd of horsemen, when a fox breaks covert, more dexterously and quickly than His Royal Highness; and that when hounds run hard over a big country, no man can take a line of his own and live with them better. Also, when the wind has been blowing hard, often have I seen His Royal Highness knocking over driven grouse and partridges and high-rocketing pheasants in first-rate

workmanlike style. He is held to be a good yachtsman, and as Commodore of the Royal Yacht Squadron is looked up to by those who love that pleasant and exhilarating pastime. His encouragement of racing is well known, and his attendance at the University, Public School, and other important Matches testifies to his being, like most English gentlemen, fond of all manly sports. I consider it a great privilege to be allowed to dedicate these volumes to so eminent a sportsman as His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, and I do so with sincere feelings of respect and esteem and loyal devotion.

BEAUFORT.

BADMINTON

# PREFACE

A FEW LINES only are necessary to explain the object with which these volumes are put forth. There is no modern encyclopædia to which the inexperienced man, who seeks guidance in the practice of the various British Sports and Pastimes, can turn for information. Some books there are on Hunting, some on Racing, some on Lawn Tennis, some on Fishing, and so on; but one Library, or succession of volumes, which treats of the Sports and Pastimes indulged in by Englishmen—and women—is wanting. The Badminton Library is offered to supply the want. Of the imperfections which must be found in the execution of such a design we are

conscious. Experts often differ. But this we may say, that those who are seeking for knowledge on any of the subjects dealt with will find the results of many years' experience written by men who are in every case adepts at the Sport or Pastime of which they write. It is to point the way to success to those who are ignorant of the sciences they aspire to master, and who have no friend to help or coach them, that these volumes are written.

To those who have worked hard to place simply and clearly before the reader that which he will find within, the best thanks of the Editor are due. That it has been no slight labour to supervise all that has been written he must acknowledge; but it has been a labour of love, and very much lightened by the courtesy of the Publisher, by the unflinching, indefatigable assistance of the Sub-Editor, and by the intelligent and able arrangement of each subject by the various writers, who are so thoroughly masters of the subjects of which they treat. The reward we all hope to reap is that our work may prove useful to this and future generations.

THE EDITOR.

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# TENNIS

BY

J. M. HEATHCOTE

# INTRODUCTION

It is impossible to write an essay on Tennis without some attempt to discover the origin of and to trace the development of ball-games; but it is beyond the scope of this treatise to offer anything like a complete history of an exercise so ancient and cosmopolitan. Moreover, all sources of information on the archæology of Tennis have been already carefully investigated by Mr. Julian Marshall, who devoted many years to the work of collating what evidence can be found in the literature and traditions of earlier ages. I will therefore refer the reader who wishes to be fully informed on these matters to the 'Annals of Tennis' (the 'Field' Office, 346 Strand, 1878), and to the excellent treatise by M. Edouard Fournier, 'Le Jeu de Paume, son histoire et sa description' (Paris, 1862), and will offer only the briefest possible outline of the history of ball-play from the dawn of its evolution to the present time. But I will endeavour, with some practical reflections on Tennis, some simple explanations, and a few records of modern times, to dispel the too prevalent impressions regarding the mystery that is said to shroud the game, its supposed insuperable difficulty, and its alleged expense, that prevail among the inexperienced, in whom I hope I may awaken an interest in this most fascinating pastime.

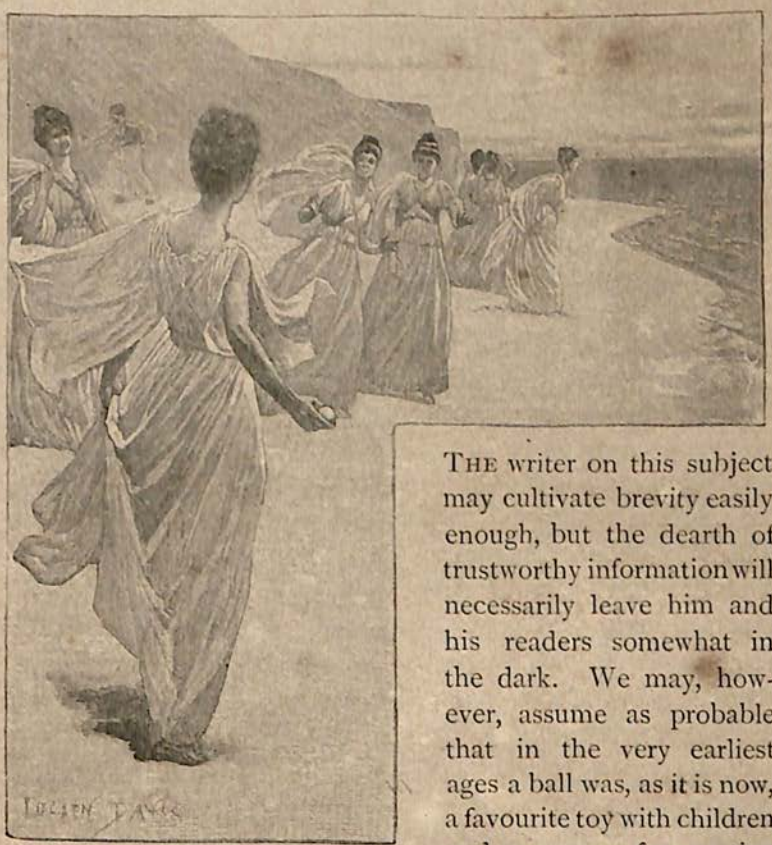
I will also take this opportunity of expressing my thanks to the Hon. Alfred Lyttelton for his admirable paper on 'The Relation of Tennis to other Games'; to Mr. W. C. Marshall, whose remarks on 'The Construction of a Tennis court' are doubly interesting, because in him long and successful experience as a player is combined with the knowledge of a trained architect, to Mr. Julian Marshall and to Mr. H. Cox, for their kind permission to reproduce some of the illustrations of the 'Annals of Tennis,' and to the gentlemen and professional players who have placed at my disposal much valuable information.

# CHAPTER I

## THE PALÆONTOLOGY OF BALL-GAMES

Brevis esse laboro,
Obscurus fio.

HORACE, *Ep. ad Pisones*



A BALL-GAME OF OLDEN TIMES

THE writer on this subject may cultivate brevity easily enough, but the dearth of trustworthy information will necessarily leave him and his readers somewhat in the dark. We may, however, assume as probable that in the very earliest ages a ball was, as it is now, a favourite toy with children and a means of recreation to athletes of both sexes.

There is no allusion in Hebrew Scriptures to any pastime of this or any other character, nor have I been able to learn that Assyrian inscriptions have thrown any light on the subject; but the recent excavations at Gurob (a village about sixty miles south of Cairo), by Mr. Flinders Petrie, have brought to the light of day implements for recreation which unquestionably belong to the period of the twelfth dynasty, and must therefore have been in existence more than 4,000 years. In this place were found balls made of leather, and some also made of wood; the former are now rather battered and out of shape, but I saw one wooden ball in Mr. Petrie's collection, an almost perfect sphere about the size of a billiard-ball. But even more interest may be attached to the discovery of several tip-cats, bearing a close resemblance to the disagreeable missile so dear to the London *gamin*, for these bear silent witness to the primæval existence of a game in which force is applied and motion imparted to a projectile by an implement of some sort.

The invention of the ball in Europe is attributed by Herodotus[1] to the Lydians in the reign of Atys. We read[2] that Anagalla, a native of Corcyra, presented a ball to Nausicaa, the daughter of Alcinous, King of Phæacia, and the pastimes of that lady and her attendants are too well known to require comment. Theodor Panofka tells us that astragali and ball were the popular pastimes of the age, and that the latter was a favourite amusement of the gods.[3] Every schoolboy knows that Mæcenas played at ball at Capua, and that Virgil and Horace did not. Pilicrepi, ball-players, or jugglers, are mentioned in one of the political inscriptions of Pompeii.[4] We are told that Augustus used to play at ball,[5] and that Pliny's friend Spurinna exercised himself in some such game with a view of warding off old age,[6] and the allusions to a sphæristerium, or arena for play, and to the various games, Follis, Trigonalis, Paganica and Harpastum, in

[1] Lib. i. c. 94.
[2] Ælian, lib. ii.
[3] *Manners and Customs of the Greeks.*
[4] *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, vol. iv. no. 1147.
[5] Suetonius, *Aug.* 83.
[6] Pliny, *Ep.* iii.

Pliny, Ovid, Martial, Horace, Plautus, and Propertius, prove the popularity of some such pastime in the classic ages. Becker[1] tells us that the last mentioned of these games was a rough and violent one, but it is worthy of notice because it is the earliest example of a sphæromachia, or game in which sides were formed, as appears by the terms used by Galen—emulation (*φιλοτιμία*), generalship (*στρατηγία*) and positions lost and won, *φυλάττειν τὸ κτηθὲν ἢ ἀνασώζειν τὸ μετεθέν*. In Gilbert Wakefield's notes on Pope's translation of Homer's 'Odyssey' we are told that the Lacedæmonians used to play Harpastum, then known by the names *φαινίνδα*, *φενίνδα*, *ἐφετίνδα* and *φεννῖς*. If philological research could but find precedent for the interchange of *φ* and *τ* we should have a remarkable instance of the revival—I can hardly say survival—of the fittest designation for our game.

But there is little or no evidence to show whether these pastimes were games in the modern acceptance of the word, or were gymnastic exercises in which young athletes indulged with a view of acquiring muscular strength and grace of movement; nor is it possible to trace in them any affinity to Tennis. It may, however, be interesting to note a few expressions and allusions which suggest that throwing and 'returning'[2] a ball may have been an element of some of these exercises.

L. Becq de Fouquières tells us that the following terms were frequently used: *ῥίπτειν*, *βάλλειν*, *ἀφιέναι*, *ἀνταφιέναι*, *πέμπειν*, *προπέμπειν*, and *ἀντιπέμπειν*.[3] That sides may have been formed, and the players opposed to one another, may perhaps be inferred from a passage in the writings of the Byzantine historian Pollux quoted by him: 'Le vaincu était appelé âne (*ὄνος*) et faisait tout ce qui lui était commandé; le vainqueur était nommé roi (*βασιλεύς*), et ordonnait.' No light is thrown on these expressions in Grecian history, but we read,[4] 'Parmi les peintures égyptiennes de Beni-Hassan il en est une particulièrement curieuse qui donne raison à notre

[1] *Gallus*, Excursus vii.

[2] For explanation of this and other words in commas, see pp. 123, 124.

[3] *Les Jeux des Anciens*. Paris, 1869, p. 191. [4] *Ibid.* p. 194.

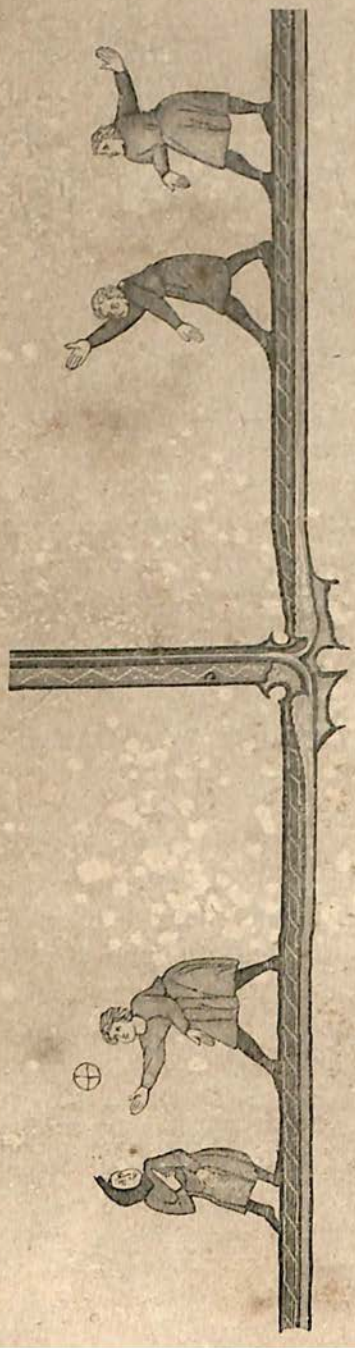


FIG. 1.

hypothèse. Deux femmes, placées à quelque distance l'une de l'autre, sont montées sur deux de leurs compagnes, et jouent à la balle. On doit reconnaître là un jeu qu'on pratique encore de nos jours. Plusieurs joueurs montés sur le dos de leurs camarades se lancent la balle de l'un à l'autre. Celui qui la laisse échapper devient à son tour le porteur.'

Plautus[1] uses the terms 'datores' and 'factores': 'stroke' and 'return' are forcibly suggested by 'datatim ludere,' 'remittere,' 'repercutere,' 'expulsare,' 'geminare,' and the following expressive line, 'Et non sperato fugientem reddere gestu,'[2] which must appeal to the heart of a Tennis player, and recall to his mind the supreme effort which enabled him to make an unexpected return.

The literature of ball-games ceases soon after the Christian era; but as all literature declined at this age, it is not surprising that we have little or no information during many centuries. It is reasonable to suppose that some ball-games

[1] *Curcul.* ii. 3, 17.

[2] Salelus Bassus, *Paneg. in Pis.* 173.

continued to be popular in Italy, and were thus introduced by Roman soldiers into Gaul and Spain, and that these were the germs from which *Longue Paume*, *Pallone*, and other kindred exercises, the prototypes of Tennis, derived their origin.

Hand-ball, or *Longue Paume*, as it was called in the middle ages, was played in Italy and France in the parks or *fossés* of the châteaux, or in any uncovered arenas that could be found suitable for the purpose.

Strutt [1] gives representations of what he calls balloon and hand-ball taken from MSS. of the fourteenth century. Fig. 1 is a facsimile of one of these. Here we see a player just about to strike a pallone, or large ball, with the palm of his hand. Near him stands a man who is apparently an attendant or instructor, and on the opposite side of the inter-columnar ornament are two players ready to receive and return the ball.

We are frequently reminded that *Longue Paume* was the sport of kings and nobles. Villaret [2] tells us that the death of Louis X. was caused by a chill caught when playing in the forest of Vincennes in 1316. In 1399 the game was played for the amusement of Charles VI. at the château of Creil-sur-Oise. Brantôme says of Charles IX. that 'when it was fine he was always out of doors, either campaigning or in action, or playing *la paume*, and particularly *la longue paume*, of which he was very fond.'

We have every reason to believe that this, the oldest of French ball-games, was practised continuously through many centuries, in the course of which the substitution of an implement for the hand, the use of improved balls, and the institution of 'chases' invested the pastime with constantly increasing interest.

This interest, however, began to wane in the early part of this century. There was an arena for play in the Champs Elysées in 1820, and the head-quarters of *Longue Paume* in

[1] *Sports and Pastimes*, ed. 1831, p. 96.
[2] *Hist. de France*, tome vii. p. 46.

Paris were subsequently removed to the Luxembourg Gardens, where the game was played in 1867. But by this time it had lost its popular character, and is now seldom if ever played.

Pallone, the Olympic game, or game of giants, as it has been called, owes its origin to some early Roman ball-game. Its growth was contemporary with that of Longue Paume, but we have no evidence to show that one was derived from the other, or even that they had a common ancestor. The ball, which may have resembled the Roman *follis*, was in the earliest times of which we have any record made of the bladder of some animal covered with leather and inflated with air, and probably did not differ very much from those now in use. The modern ball is five inches in diameter; it is hollow, and has a double coat of strong cowhide. In this covering is a small hole furnished with a valve, which allows air to be driven into the ball by a force-pump and prevents its escape. The elasticity thus imparted to the ball is so great that if dropped on to a hard floor it will rebound to within a few inches from the point from which it fell. The hand which sufficed for the ruder ball of early times gave place to a *scanno* or wooden club, or to a *bracciale*, a cylindrical gauntlet covered with blunt spikes, worn on the hand and wrist. Dr. A. Fisher has written an interesting work on ancient and modern Pallone,[1] to which the reader who seeks further information is referred. In his description of the game as played in 1822 at Bologna, he says that a 'pallone' may be driven one hundred yards. This is probably no exaggeration, for at an exhibition of Pallone given at the Queen's Club, West Kensington, on Easter Monday, 1889, some Italian players from Alva, near Turin, illustrated the wonderful propelling power of a weapon so clumsy in appearance, yet so effective in execution, as a *bracciale*.

There was, until recently, a court in Florence near the Porta San Gallo, and an oil-painting by Raphael Sorbi, a Florentine artist, gives a good representation of six players engaged three a side in the game as played in the last century.

[1] *The Game of Pallone.* London, 1865.

This court is now pulled down, as are many others in Italy, and the game is now falling into disuse.

Another exercise, probably of great antiquity, is still practised in Northern France and Belgium, and is known as 'Jeu de balle au tamis.' This game, as described to me by an English gentleman who witnessed its performance at Dinant on the Meuse, is played in a vast arena, about 120 yards in length, by twelve players, six on each side. The ball is small and inelastic, covered with white leather; the implement with which it is struck is a glove, to the palm of which is attached a strong piece of leather, as hard as wood, which presents to the ball a concave surface about eight inches in length and six inches in breadth. The *tamis* is used only in the delivery of the 'service'; it resembles a segment of a drum, and the horsehair of which it is formed is sufficiently elastic to enable the server to throw the ball on to its surface and strike it in its rebound. Little or no 'return' is possible when such implements as these are employed, but the establishment of and defence of 'chases' is an interesting feature in this game.

Another variety of La Paume was, and still is, played in the Basque provinces, and is known by the name of *Jugar al blé*. It is described by a writer,[1] who evidently has observed the game, as played at St. Jean de Luz with 'a spoon-shaped basket or shield,' called a *schistera*. This game, which is also called *Pelote au Rebot*,[2] is usually played in the open air, but it is also well adapted to modern Tennis courts. I had an opportunity of witnessing in 1867 an exposition of this interesting and unique pastime by four of the best players from the Basque provinces in the Tennis court at Paris. The *schistera* they used was made of wicker-work, rather more than two feet in length, shaped like a curved canoe or basket. With this implement they caught and threw, rather than struck the ball, and their accuracy in playing for, and skill in defending, the

[1] *A Vagabond Heroine*, by Mrs. Edwardes.

[2] A description of this game and a diagram of the arena in which it is played appeared in the *Field*, Dec. 21, 1889.

'openings' were remarkable. The game was scored as at Tennis in every respect; the balls were larger and heavier than Tennis balls, which they, however, resembled in appearance.

That the above-mentioned games had some affinity to modern Tennis is sufficiently obvious, for the principle of 'stroke' and 'return' of a ball over a line marked in the arena for play by sides opposed to one another is common to them all; but there are also traditions of other ball-games played in every quarter of the globe with an implement that might in courtesy be called a racket.

A game somewhat similar to Lacrosse was played by the Chippeways, and the Mingrelians in Georgia indulged in a pastime which was not unlike modern polo. Byzantine authors mention a similar game called *τζυκανιστήριον*, in which, says Johannes Cinnamus, who lived about 1153 A.D., an implement with a broad curved end (*καμπή*), furnished with a network of catgut, was used. From this game was derived a similar exercise in Languedoc called 'Chicane,' described in Fosbrooke's 'Encyclopædia of Antiquities,' in which the implement with which the ball was struck was a sort of mallet. But the relation of these games to Tennis is so remote that their investigation will be less interesting than that of the seven ages, or rather centuries, in the course of which the beautiful game known by the name of Tennis was developed and brought by degrees to that perfect state in which we now find it.

In the course of these seven ages its very name has undergone repeated changes, and no etymological research has satisfactorily solved the question why the game is so called in England. It has been suggested that the word may have been derived from Tennois or Sennois, in the district of Champagne in France, where it was said that the game was played, or from the French word *tenez*, which might have been used by the server to his opponent; but it is scarcely probable that our ancestors should have sought a French origin for a game which was known on the Continent as La Paume. Skeat suggests *tænia* (Gr. *ταινία*), a fillet or band. This might be

an equivalent for the rope or fringe over which the ball was played in the early days of the *giuoco della corda*. Others maintain that the game was first called 'Tennes' because five competitors on each side were engaged in the exercise, and this contention is at least as satisfactory as any other. But, as guesses are not permissible in philology, it will be safer to leave Tennis in the class of words whose derivation is unknown.

## CHAPTER II

### THE HISTORY OF THE COURT, RACKET, AND BALL

But canstow playen racket to and fro?
CHAUCER, *Troylus and Cryseyde*

What treasure, uncle?
Tennis-balls, my liege.
SHAKSPEARE, *Henry V.*

IN the first age of Tennis, the thirteenth century, the game was, in France, as far as we know, played only in unenclosed spaces, but so great was its popularity in the provinces, that early in the fourteenth century it was adopted in many towns as a means of recreation and exercise. It may easily be supposed that the difficulty of securing suitable arenas for play would be here considerable, and this difficulty may have suggested the use of spaces surrounded by walls, or of edifices constructed for this special purpose, which, about that time, became known by the name of *tripots*. Why they were so called is a matter of conjecture. Etymologists have suggested no better derivation than *tripudiation* (active motion), but this is a matter of small moment, as the word is not now in use, French courts being always called *jeux*. Charles V. was probably the pioneer of this improvement on the primæval game. Mr. Marshall tells us[1] that he had a court at the Louvre, which, according to M. de Clarac, occupied two entire storeys of the palace. He had another at his Hôtel de Beautrellis, the magnificent *dépendance* of the Hôtel St. Paul, which existed till 1552. This court was 87 ft. in length, the French foot being about $\frac{3}{4}$ in. longer than the

[1] *Annals of Tennis*, p. 4.

English measure of that name. This king, with an exclusiveness that would scarcely be tolerated in modern times, issued an edict prohibiting all games within his dominions; but, early in the third age of Tennis, or fifteenth century, we hear of the erection of more courts in Paris, of which the most important was the *tripot* in the Rue Grenier Saint Lazare, called Le Petit Temple. In this court, Margot, a young woman from the province of Hainault, was accustomed to display her skill, which was said to rival that of all except the very best players.

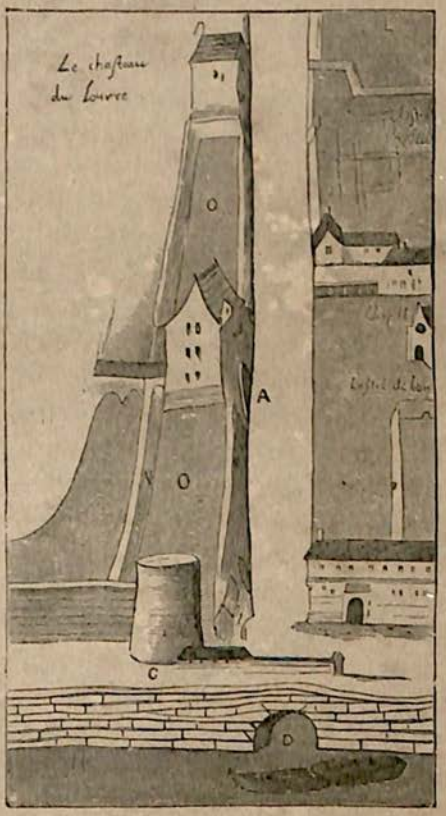



FIG. 2.

A, the Guichet du Louvre; C, the Tour du Coin; D, the Arche d'Autriche; L, the Dépendance de l'Hôtel de Villeroy; N, the Mur d'enceinte de Philippe Auguste; OO, the Emplacement des Jeux de Paume.

Tennis was still more universally encouraged in its fourth age, the sixteenth century. François I. built another court in the Louvre, which is shown in Fig. 2. In this court Henri II., a really fine player, who might probably have carried off the *éteuf d'argent*, the insignia of championship, had he cared to enter the lists, used to play.[1] At this time there were two kinds of *tripots*, or *jeux*, as they were by this time called, the *jeu à dedans*, which closely resembled a modern Tennis court, and the *jeu*

[1] *Annals of Tennis*, pp. 13, 14

*quarré*. From the latter the 'dedans,' the 'end pent-house,' on the 'service-side,' and the 'tambour' were absent; the 'winning hazards' were *le trou*, an 'opening,' 16 in. (French) square, opposite the 'grille'; *l'ais*, an upright board, 9 ft. high, 1 ft. broad, in the other corner of the same court, and *la lune*, a small round opening high up in the end-wall on both sides of the court. The existence of the last-named 'hazard' cannot have been of long duration, for it could not have been overlooked by De Garsault, who, in 1767, wrote a complete account of every detail of a Tennis court,[1] and as there is no reference to any such opening in his work, its use had probably by that time been abandoned.

Little is known of the origin of the 'tambour,' or why it is so called. It is probable that it may have been an excrescence erected for the purpose of fulfilling the conditions of a hazard, and that it was made of wood, or some material whose resonance may have suggested the name; and it is much more likely that all the above-mentioned hazards were designed for the purpose of introducing variety into the play, and preventing undue advantage from accruing to the occupier of the service-side or hazard-side, than that they were the result of the accidental configuration of courts of monasteries—a theory which has been propounded, but which cannot be supported by evidence.

We have testimony of the extraordinary popularity of *la paume* in Paris in a letter written by Lippomano, the Venetian ambassador, in which he says, 'There were more than 1,800 Tennis courts in various parts of the town of Paris.'[2] Probably, however, most of these were merely uncovered spaces in which some ball exercise could be held. In the fifteenth century there was a court at Windsor Castle, a representation of which is given in Fig. 3. 'This is a facsimile of a view taken by John Norden in 1607, showing an uncovered court with a line or cord stretched across the centre, and a representation of a

[1] *L'art du Paumier raquettier et de la Paume.*

[2] *Henry III., His Court and Times*, by M. W. Freer.

racket and some balls lying on the floor.'[1] There is evidence of a covered court at Richmond in 'Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII., arranged and catalogued by J. S. Brewer, 1519': 'Wages due Lady Day for ceiling the Tennis court at Richmond, and other places,

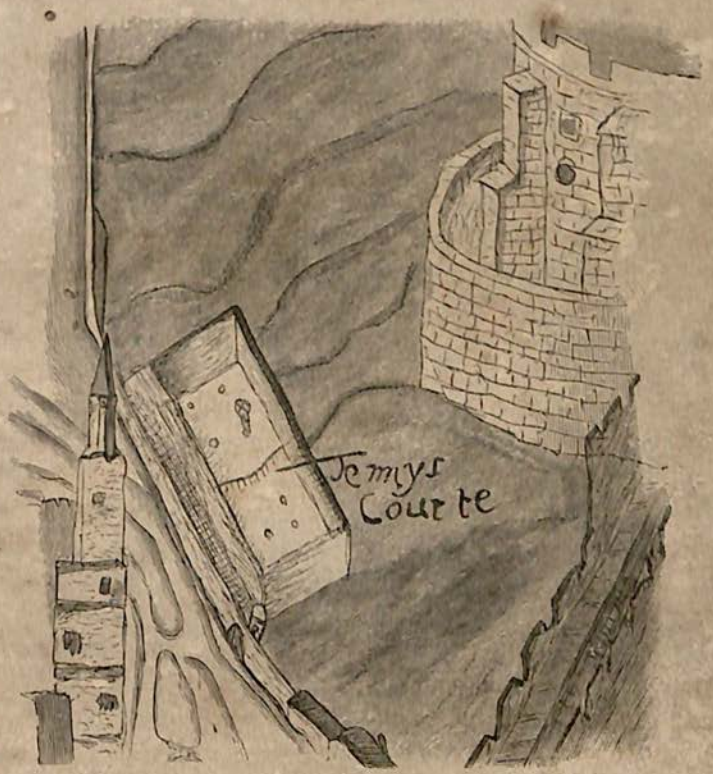



FIG. 3.

200*l.*';[2] and we hear of a court at Greenwich, of another at Oxford, and of fourteen courts in London. The dimensions of these were less than those of the *jeu à dedans* at the Louvre, the largest being only 84 feet in length and 22 feet in breadth.

[1] *Annals of Tennis*, p. 61. [2] *Ib.* p. 64.

But the most interesting event of this age of Tennis was the erection of the court at Hampton Court, because, although subsequently altered and partially rebuilt, it is the oldest court now extant in this country. We are told in the 'Annals': 'This court was built by Henry VIII. after the year 1526, when Wolsey surrendered to him the lease of the Palace; for it is evident that at least the upper, if not also the lower, part of the wall is of later date than what remains elsewhere of Wolsey's building at Hampton Court, but is yet anterior to Wren's alteration of the garden front. Hollar fortunately sketched a view of this front as Henry VIII. finished it, and as it remained until the time of Wren. This drawing has been preserved by the engraving of J. Pye (made for the Society of Antiquaries), a large oblong folio, which shows the Tennis court, with the covered passage by which the King, it is said, used to pass from it to his apartment.'[1] Fig. 4 is a reproduction of this sketch. The modern court is shown in the frontispiece.

In the fifth age, the seventeenth century, the game was no less popular than it had previously been. In 1614 there were two courts at the Palace of Fontainebleau. I am indebted to Mr. Marshall for Fig. 5, which is an accurate copy of a bird's-eye-view, entitled 'Portrait de la maison royale de Fontaine Belleau.' The numbers 8 indicate the position of the two courts, which form part of a block of buildings in the left corner of the Cour du Cheval Blanc. Fig. 6 shows the position of the modern court, on a site not far from that of the ancient building. The beauty of the architectural surroundings, and its own unobtrusive and harmonious character, offer to the eye of an artist a more picturesque scene than is usually presented by a combination of such utilitarian objects—a Tennis court and a gas-lamp. In 1657 the Dutch ambassador ascertained that there were 114 regular *tripots* in Paris, and in 1686 the court at Versailles, known to every reader of the History of the French Revolution, was commenced and completed; not, however, until after Louis XIV., who had in

[1] *Annals of Tennis*, p. 65.

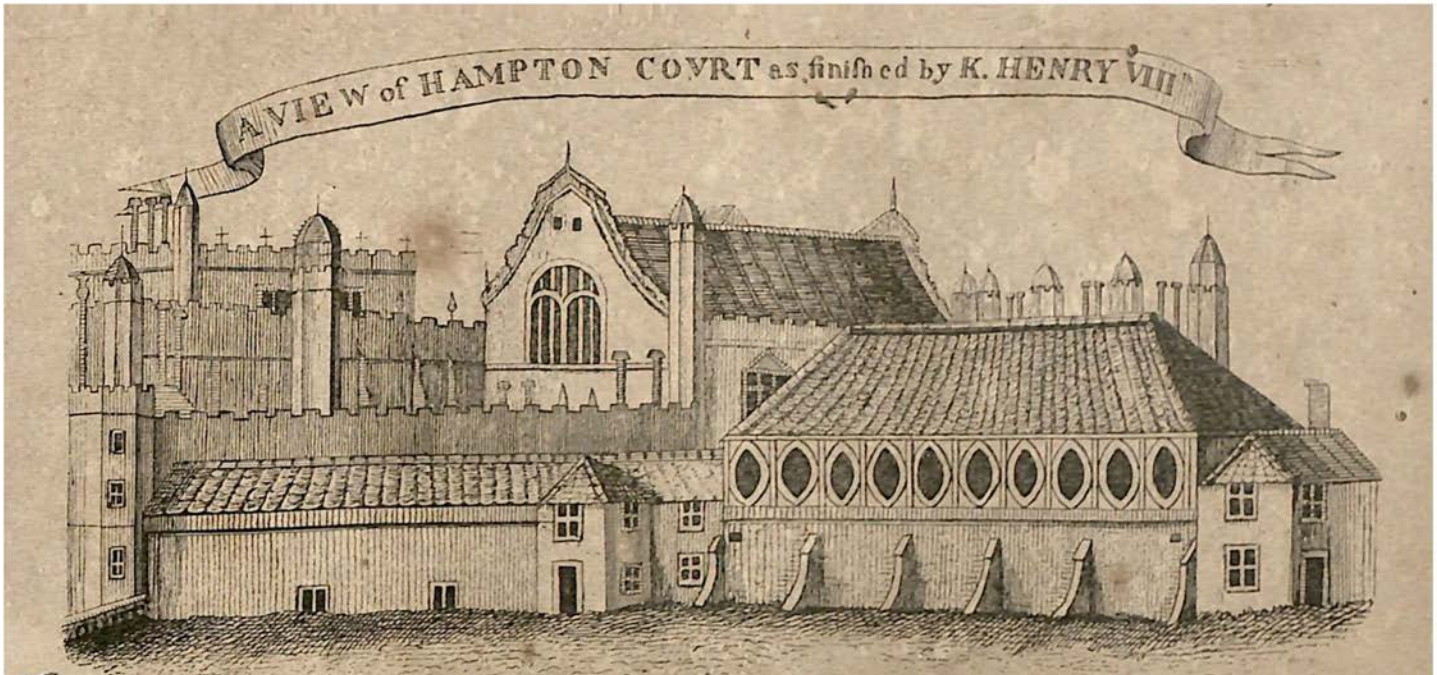



FIG. 4.

his youth been fond of Tennis, had ceased to reside in the palace.

Contemporary history in England teaches us that Charles I., while yet Duke of York, began to play Tennis, and that in 1610 his account for rackets, balls, and other necessaries, amounted to 20*l.*[1] In 1619 we hear of his making an appointment to play in the court at St. James's Palace at 6 A.M.,[2] and his love of the game continued after he had ascended the throne. Although the stern realities of the Rebellion and the troubled times of the Commonwealth hindered its further development, the numerous references made to Tennis in 'Pepys's Diary' show that it reasserted its popularity in the reign of the Merry Monarch, who used frequently to play in the court in James Street, Haymarket, the erection of which enhances the interest which is attached to the records of that century. This court has been the theatre of important matches and first-class play, and has been the resort of distinguished lovers of the game to a greater extent than any other court in the world; and lovers of Tennis cannot but deplore the inexorable laws of supply and demand which so enhanced the value of land in the metropolis, that the maintenance of this court could no longer be a financial success, and regretfully recall to mind the conversion of a building so rich in interesting associations into the warehouse of an army clothier in 1866.

Although I had separated the æon of Tennis into seven ages, or centuries, I had no intention of parodying Shakspere's series of metaphors; but it is remarkable that in the sixth age we first hear of 'spectacles on nose,' worn by the celebrated Masson, and that the number of courts was a world too wide for the shrunk company of players and frequenters. In the eighteenth century many of the old *tripots* were pulled down, others were converted into theatres, and in 1780 we are told that at the most there remained but 13 of the 114 which had been in existence two centuries before that time.

In our own country the game was beginning to lose its

[1] *Annals of Tennis*, p. 79. [2] *Ib.* p. 81.

popular character, although still played by the higher classes of society. Many old courts were abandoned or destroyed, and we hear of the construction of three only in the latter half of the century : the Duke of Richmond's at Goodwood, the Duke of Bedford's at Woburn, and the court in Tennis-court Road, Cambridge, erected in 1734, recently pulled down and replaced by the new buildings of Pembroke College.

There is, however, no probability of the last age of this eventful history passing into mere oblivion, for the nineteenth

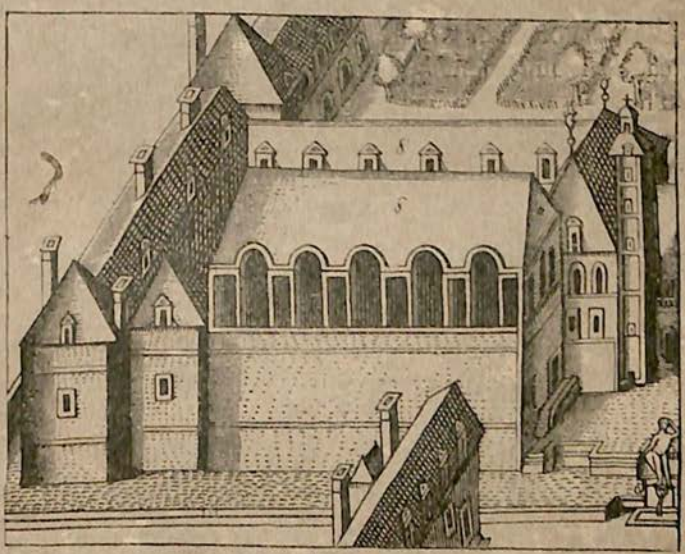


FIG. 5.

century has witnessed a renewed and constantly increasing enthusiasm for Tennis, shown by the number of courts built by public and private enterprise, on improved lines, and equipped with modern requirements, and by the interest taken in all important matches.

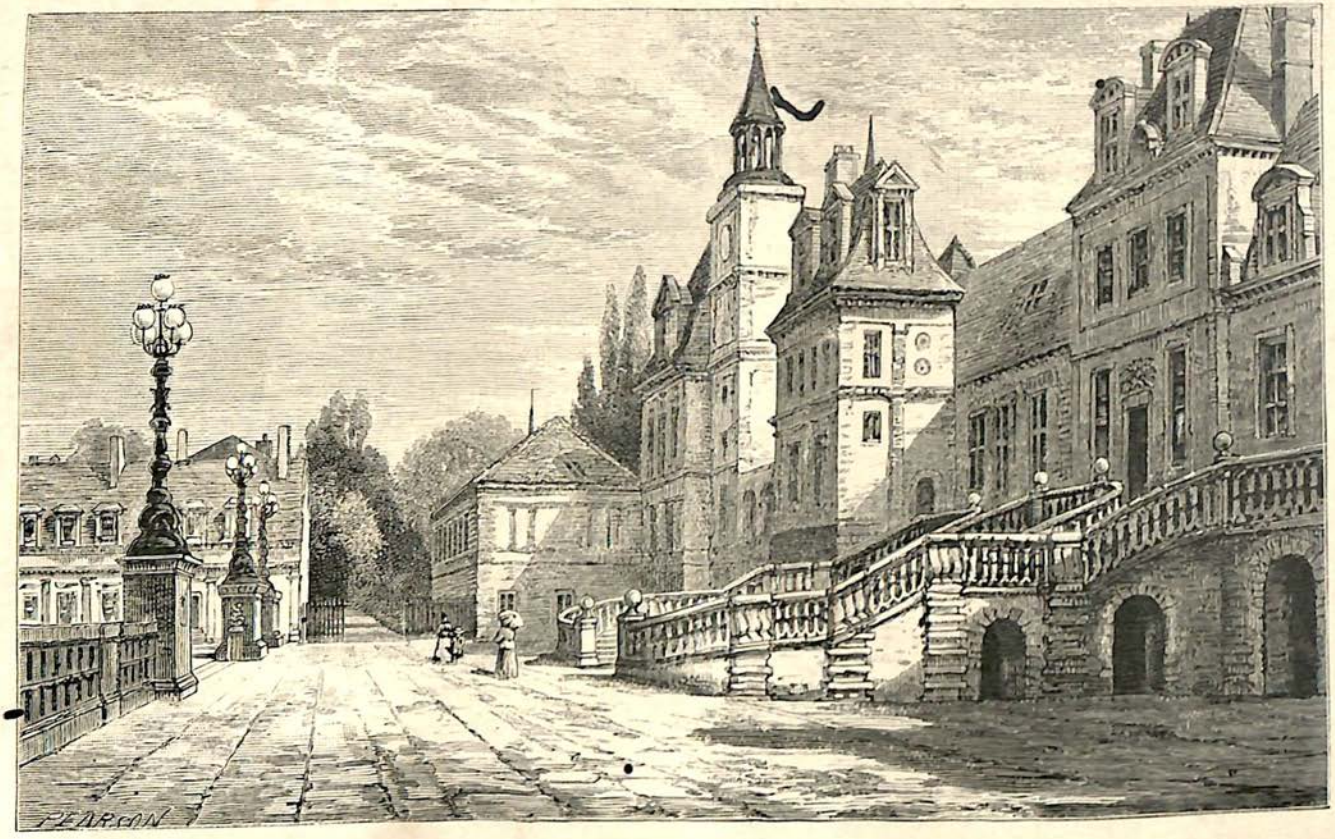
On the Continent, although it has witnessed the closing, in 1839, of the court in the Rue Mazarine in Paris, its chronicles record the construction, in 1840, and existence, until it was removed to make room for the new Opera-house, of the ex-

cellent court in the Passage Sandrié; the erection of two courts now standing in the Terrasse des Feuillants, in the Jardin des Tuileries; the re-opening of the court at Bordeaux; and the construction of courts at Deauville, Cannes, and Pau. Three have been recently erected in America, one at Melbourne, one in Tasmania; and in our own country, while three only have been pulled down—one at Cambridge and two at Prince's Club - the list has been augmented by no less than thirty constructed since the beginning of this century, and it may be predicted with confidence that before its close we shall have seen the completion of many more courts in response to the ever-increasing requirements of our young athletes.

The following is a list of courts now existing in this country :—

Four in London—One at Lord's, two at the Queen's Club, West Kensington, and one at Prince's Club, Knightsbridge.

One at Hampton Court.
Two at Cambridge.
One at Oxford.
One at Leamington.
One at Brighton.
One at Manchester.
The Duke of Richmond's at Goodwood.
The Duke of Bedford's at Woburn.
The Duke of Wellington's at Strathfieldsaye.
The Duke of Fife's at East Sheen.
The Marquis of Salisbury's at Hatfield.
The Earl of Craven's at Coombe Abbey.
Lord Windsor's at Hewell Grange.
Lord Leconfield's at Petworth.
Lord Brougham's at Brougham Hall.
Lord Wimborne's at Canford.
Sir George Prescott's at Theobalds.
Sir T. Hesketh's at Easton Neston.
Sir E. Loder's at Whittlebury.




FONTAINEBLEAU

Mr. A. Kennard's at Crawley Court.
Mr. A. Brassey's at Heythrop.
Mr. Cazalet's at Fairlawn.
Mr. Gundry's at Bridport.
Sir E. Guinness's in Dublin.
Mr. Orchardson's at Westgate-on-Sea.
Mr. McClean's at Rustall, Tunbridge Wells.

With the exception of the twin courts at the Queen's Club, which were designed by one architect, erected by one builder, at the same time, on the same lines, and with similar materials, no two courts are exactly alike, but it will be generally admitted that Lord Leconfield's court at Petworth is the fastest in England, while the Brighton court is the slowest, and that the courts at the Queen's Club, Manchester, Mr. Gundry's, the court built by the late Sir R. Loder, Mr. Cazalet's, and the newly erected court at Prince's Club, most nearly approach perfection with regard to dimensions, light, and relative 'pace' of walls and floor.

It may be interesting to compare the salient features of seven typical courts, given in the table on p. 24, which includes the largest courts in existence, Fontainebleau, Hampton Court, and Lord's; the smallest, Brougham and Oxford; and two which may be cited as perfect models, Whittlebury and Manchester.

A detailed account of the characteristics of these Tennis-courts would occupy too much space, but brief mention must be made of the charming and unique court erected in 1875, by Mr. W. Q. Orchardson, R.A., at Westgate-on-Sea. The floor, which is 90 ft. 6 in. in length, 30 ft. 2 in. in breadth, is made of Portland cement, and is laid on six inches of concrete, which rests on the chalk soil. The main-wall, which is 18 feet high, batteries, and end-walls below the pent-house, are made of brick, and are covered with Portland cement. The walls above the pent-house are of the same height as the main-wall, and are formed with boards laid longitudinally. The pent-house is

| | Fontainebleau | Hampton Court | Lord's | Manchester | Whittlebury | Brougham | Oxford |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ft. in. | ft. in. | ft. in. | ft. in. | ft. in. | ft. in. | ft. in. |
| Length, including penthouse | 112 10½ | 110 11 | 111 0 | 109 0 | 108 10 | 103 6 | 103 9½ |
| Width, including penthouse | 38 8 | 39 7 | 38 8 | 38 9 | 38 5½ | 37 6 | 35 8½ |
| Length of floor | 99 0 | 96 3 | 96 0½ | 94 6 | 95 0 | 92 0 | 93 0 |
| Width of floor | 32 4 | 32 1¾ | 31 8 | 31 8 | 31 6½ | 30 7 | 29 10 |
| Play line at sides | 19 7 | 18 8½ | 17 4 | 25 1 | 11 0¾ | 19 10 | 17 0 |
| Play line at ends | 23 6 | 23 10 | 22 0 | 30 0 | 23 0 | 27 0 | 27 0 |
| Height to ceiling | 35 2 | 31 9 | 30 0 | 33 4 | 30 0 | 27 0 | 27 0 |
| Width of dedans | 23 10 | 22 9 | 22 4½ | 21 9 | 21 8¼ | 20 6 | 21 2¾ |
| Height of net at ends | 5 5 | 4 11 | 4 8 | 5 1 at hook<br>5 0 at post | 5 1 at hook<br>5 2 at post | — | 4 10 |

supported by light posts, around which are trained honeysuckle, Virginia creeper, and Banksia roses, forming an ornamental trellised arcade outside the court. There is no roof, but wire netting 8 feet high, carried round the entire court, is sufficient to prevent the loss of balls. It might be imprudent to erect such a court on a clay soil, or in a situation where the rain fall is excessive, but anyone who wishes for this valuable adjunct to a country-house will find that he can gratify his

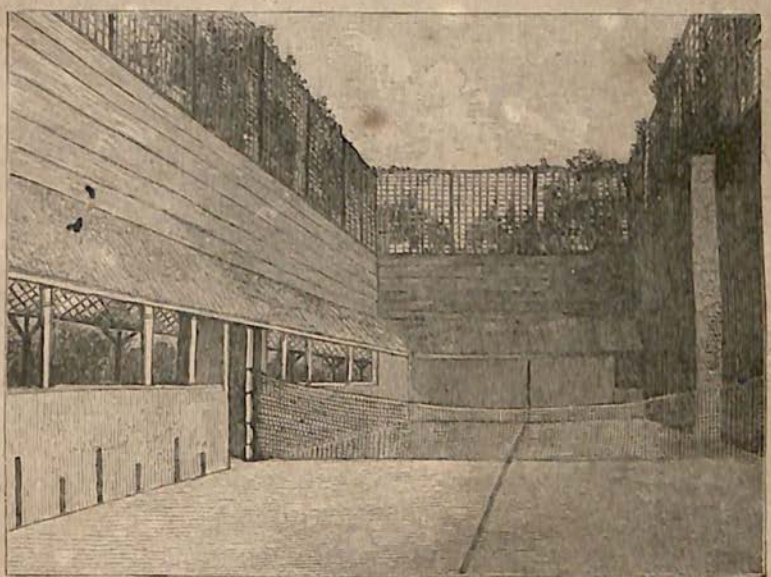


FIG. 7.

ambition without being called on to spend more than one-fourth of the cost of a fully-equipped court, and that, although precluded from play on damp or rainy days, he will fully appreciate the charm of exercise *sub jove*. Fig. 7 shows this court as seen from the dedans.

Some interest may be attached to the structure at Rustall, as it is more suggestive of the game played by our ancestors in the sixteenth century than any modern building; and also because it is the only court in England where use is made of

black balls, as was formerly the custom in Spain. It was recently built by Mr. McClean as an arena for long fives, and, although, owing to the absence of chase-lines, it lacks the refinement and interest of Tennis, it affords scope for an excellent game, with which any Tennis-player can readily make himself familiar. This court is perfectly symmetrical, the service-side and the hazard-side being similar in every respect. The walls and floor are of Portland cement, and a small pent-house of the same material is taken round the entire structure. The court is entered from a gallery at the net, and there is a corresponding gallery in the opposite main-wall; but these openings are 'out-of-court.' There is no 'dedans,' 'grille,' or 'tambour'; the only 'hazards' are two openings, 3 feet square, in the centre of each end-wall below the pent-house. It was not designed in imitation of any past or present court, but in many particulars it bears some resemblance to the representations we have of the *jeux quarrés* of earlier ages.

Having thus briefly traced the outline of the history of the court, I will here introduce a paper by Mr. W. C. Marshall, which enters fully on the most suitable aspect for a Tennis-court, on the best building materials, and on the systems of lighting and ventilation that he considers to be most satisfactory, and throws light on that most difficult problem, the relative pace of walls and floor. These details merit the attention of all who are interested in the past or the future construction of a Tennis court.

## ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE COURT.

*Aspect.*—If practicable a Tennis court should stand east and west, with the dedans at the east end.

This position gives least glare from the skylights, and places the main-wall, in which it is desirable to have windows, on the north side.

*The Floor.*—Marble, various freestones, and cement, have

been used for the floor of a Tennis court. Marble is costly, and said to become slippery. Sandstones are all more or less liable to flake. It is difficult to make cement quite uniform in character, and the kind of elasticity it possesses is less suitable to the game of Tennis than to that of Rackets.

The best material is a fine uniform limestone, such as the blue lias used at Lord's, the Queen's Club, and the new Prince's Club courts.

Caen stone also makes a very good floor. Though a soft stone, it hardens with time, and stands the wear well. It is easy to lay with a close joint, but is light in colour, and, in this country, more costly than lias ; it has been employed at the courts built for the Duke of Fife at Sheen, and for the Trinity and Clare Club at Cambridge. With the exception of black marble and some sandstones, no natural stone is dark enough, but requires to be stained.

At the Queen's Club the floors were treated alternately with solutions of permanganate of potash and manganese sulphate ; this double application causes manganese to be deposited in the stone to whatever depth the solutions penetrate—in the instance mentioned to about $\frac{1}{16}$th of an inch—and forms a quite permanent dark-brown dye to that depth. This method is not injurious to the stone, and is in every way preferable to the slippery and evil-smelling compound of bullock's blood and black formerly used.

*Walls.*—Whether the walls are built of brick or stone will depend on local considerations ; in any case they must be coated about one inch thick with Portland cement. The surface should not be quite as smooth as the plasterer is able to work it ; but as the more the cement is worked the harder and better it becomes, it is best to have it brought to a smooth face and then lightly brushed over, by which means a slight uniform roughness is obtained.

The walls require colouring, and various plans have been tried. Distemper comes off and dirties the balls ; oil paint, japan, and similar substances stop the suction of the cement,

and to some extent prevent it from absorbing condensed moisture, and so conduce to what is generally called the "sweating" of the walls; moreover, paint cannot be used on cement till it is twelve months old.

The difficulty in finding a satisfactory colouring material for the walls has led to the use of coloured cement, and it is interesting to note that the remains of the walls of the old court at Easton Neston were finished in very hard black cement about an eighth of an inch thick.

Recently, in Mr. Gundry's court lamp black, and in the Queen's Club courts vegetable black, have been used successfully for this purpose. Manganese black is a better dye, interfering less with the setting of the cement. Any colouring matter, however, diminishes to some extent the strength of the cement.

The battery-walls should be built of brickwork, with cement mortar, and cemented in the same way as the rest of the walls.

In some courts the end-walls and tambour are faced with stone. Unless very well fixed the stones are liable to be shaken, and when well built, as at Manchester, they are somewhat too lively.

The cement should be taken over the sills of galleries and round the sides of all openings, slightly rounded on the edge, as, if wood sills are used, the joint between the cement and wood is apt to break away.

In connection with the floor and walls the question naturally arises, What constitutes a fast court? This is not very easy to answer, for the word 'fast' is apparently used to imply different things: either that the ball travels fast, or that the player has to strike or move fast. To satisfy the first definition, the floor and walls should be as smooth and elastic as possible. To satisfy the second the floor and side-walls should be smooth and inelastic, the back-wall rough and elastic—the floor being the most important factor.

In considering this question, it must be borne in mind that

the horizontal velocity of a ball is much greater than the vertical velocity, perhaps eight times as great on the average. A ball will come away quickest from a perfectly smooth and elastic floor. Inelasticity diminishes the vertical velocity, roughness the horizontal.

Inelasticity, therefore, does not materially diminish the pace of the ball, but it does diminish the time the ball is on the bound, which depends solely on the vertical component of the velocity. Hence, on an inelastic floor, the ball will travel nearly as fast as on an elastic one, but the bound will be shorter, and the time to strike less.

A rough floor, on the other hand, will diminish the velocity materially, but not at all affect the length of time on the bound.

The conditions are similar with regard to the side-walls, except that inelasticity does not here shorten the time of the bound, but causes the ball to keep nearer the walls, compelling the player to move further in order to reach it. In the case of the end-walls the conditions are reversed, as the pace at which the ball will come off from it depends almost entirely on the elasticity of the wall, while roughness will make a cut ball fall quicker, but will have little effect on one which is not cut.

The writer's view is that both the floor and walls should have a high degree of elasticity, which is to be attained by hardness and solidity; that the floor should be smooth but not polished, and the walls should have a slight degree of roughness sufficient to give full effect to cut and twist.

*Lighting.*—There should always be ample skylights. In a smoky town a width of ten feet on either side of the ridge, supposing the roof is of the ordinary single-span description, will not be too much. Rough-rolled plate glass is the best for glazing; this cannot be got in greater lengths than eight feet, and it is better not to exceed six. Whether the ordinary wood bars or one of the patent systems of glazing is used, it is essential to provide for carrying off any water condensed on the under surface of the glass.

The diffusion of light is assisted by the employment of light-coloured woodwork in the roof and ceiling. Windows in the main-wall above the play-line, although not essential, are valuable for lighting, as well as for ventilation. They should be glazed with ground glass to avoid the necessity of blinds.

It is better not to have any windows in the service-wall, as they cause a shadow to be thrown under the side batteries.

The question of electric lighting has not as yet been tested. Gas has been tried, but the result was unsatisfactory. The problem of lighting a large room with black walls, and where all lights must be kept thirty feet from the floor, is a novel and difficult one, and it is hard to say what amount of light would be required.

The cost of a separate installation for such occasional use as would be required would be almost prohibitive; but where current could be laid on, it would be worthy of consideration. The cost, in addition to the original outlay, would probably be from two to three shillings an hour.

*Ventilation and Warming.*—The windows should be made to open easily and quickly; an outside gallery is generally provided for this purpose, and it is important the marker should have easy access to it.

Where there are no buildings adjoining, large hit-and-miss ventilators, of the description used in stables, can be put in the side-wall and under the pent-house.

Roof ventilation is, of course, desirable; but the necessary gearing for opening and shutting any ventilators is expensive and often difficult to arrange.

Warming, except to a very moderate extent, is not required for the players, but a coil of hot-water pipes will help to keep the court dry. It may be placed in a channel under the net covered with an iron grating, in the position of the trough usually formed to catch the balls.

Hot-water pipes in the dedans are a comfort to spectators.

A system of ventilation, when all windows and other

openings are closed—which, by slightly warming the floor and walls, effectually prevents condensation of moisture, a frequent cause of interference with play in the winter months—has been adopted at the Manchester and Queen's Club courts. The floor is carried by brick arches, and in the vaults are placed hot-water pipes. The walls are built with a hollow space, up which the warm air escapes into the upper part of the court.

An extract flue of large size, in connection with the flue from the furnace, draws air from a grating under the net, and so provides for a complete circulation.

The amount of warming effected is slight, but sufficient, and in a public court such an arrangement is very desirable.

*Pent-house.*—The roof of the pent-house should be covered with boards 1½ inch thick, or with two layers of inch boarding. The nosing, or plate forming the 'bandeau,' should be of oak or some other hard wood.

*Posts.*—The gallery-posts should be as small as possible; and are, therefore, better made of iron than wood. The hook to which the end of the net is attached should be sunk in the main-wall.

*Lines.*—The play-line should be made of wood, whose resonance helps the marker to judge when a ball is out of play, a point which, from his position, it is often difficult for him to decide.

The 'bandeau,' the chase-lines, and other lines, should be painted in subdued tints; light or staring colours catch the eye and are very distracting.

*Cost.*—The expense of building varies greatly with time and place, but the cost of a well-appointed Tennis-court, exclusive of dressing-rooms or any accommodation for a marker, may be roughly stated at 2,000*l.*

## THE RACKET.

Littré tells us that the oldest form of this word was *rachete*, or *rasquete*, and gives as a probable derivation, *racha*, old Latin for καρπός or ταρσός, the wrist or ankle. M. de Paulmy[1] mentions the early use in Italy of a *racchetta*, and of a *raqueta* in Spain. The evolution of those words from 'retis,' 'reticus,' 'reticulum,' 'reticulata,' 'retiquetta,' has been offered as an alternative solution of this philological problem. It is probable that the Italians, when playing *la paume*, found that a glove was a useful protection to the hand, and when balls were made harder and heavier, that a thicker glove was required. The transition from the thick glove to a network of strings, and the adoption of the leverage afforded by the use of a handle, may have suggested to an ingenious inventor the prototype of the implement we now use. M. Edouard Fournier,[2] describing a racket of the times of François I, says: 'Ce précieux outil était un lacis de cordes croisées l'une sur l'autre, en façon de mailles et de rets, encadré dans un cadre de bois qui s'emmanchait lui-même d'un court et fort bâton. . . . Les dames de la cour de Catherine de Médicis arrangeaient leurs cheveux en les croisant par bandes, comme les raquettiers disposaient leurs cordes. C'était ce qu'on appelait la coiffure en raquettes : nous dirions aujourd'hui en nattes.' From this we may infer that in the earlier form of this 'précieux outil,' the hoop was strung diagonally, not with main-strings parallel to the handle and cross-strings at right angles to them, and this inference is confirmed by an illustration of the court at the Louvre, by Scaino, dated 1555, in which there is a representation of a racket strung in this manner.[3] The latest instance of a racket so strung occurs in a facsimile of

[1] *Mélanges tirés d'une grande bibliothèque.* Vol. des jeux d'exercice.
[2] *Le jeu de Paume, son histoire et sa description*, p. 7.
[3] *Annals of Tennis*, p. 15.

a view of the interior of the 'Jeu de Paume commun-jardin, bearing date 1701.[1]

The French antiquary Pasquier[2] tries to fix the date of its introduction into France, relating that he, when a young man, was informed by a person named Gastelier, then seventy-six years of age, who had been a great player in his youth, that within his, Gastelier's recollection, *la paume* had been played solely with the hand, some persons using it uncovered, some protecting it with a glove, and, subsequently, with a network of cords and tendons. As Pasquier was born in 1528, this conversation may have occurred about 1550, and suggests the probability of the general adoption of the racket in the waning of the fifteenth century.

We have evidence of a distinctive era in the history of the racket in a manuscript quoted by Mr. Marshall, which, after describing the sports and pastimes provided for the amusement of Philip Archduke of Austria, King of Castile, when he was entertained by Henry VII. at Windsor Castle, tells us that 'Both Kyngs went to the tennys playe, and the Kynge of Casteele played w^th^ the Rackete, and gave the Lord Marques (Dorset) XV.'[3] From this we may infer that in the beginning of the sixteenth century a racket was used by the foreigner, who was thus enabled to give points to his English opponent, who used the hand only.

At this period use was also made of a *battoir*, or battledore, made with parchment and furnished with a long handle when required for *longue paume*, with a shorter handle for *courte paume*, or the game played in a *tripot*. That these *battoirs* were in great demand is shown by M. Fournier,[4] who tells us that the makers, when the supply of parchment ran short, had been known to avail themselves of precious manuscripts which they procured from persons who were ignorant of their value.

In support of this statement he quotes the following

[1] *Annals of Tennis*, p. 93.
[2] *Les Recherches sur la France.*
[3] *Annals of Tennis*, p. 62.
[4] *Le Jeu de Paume*, p. 7.

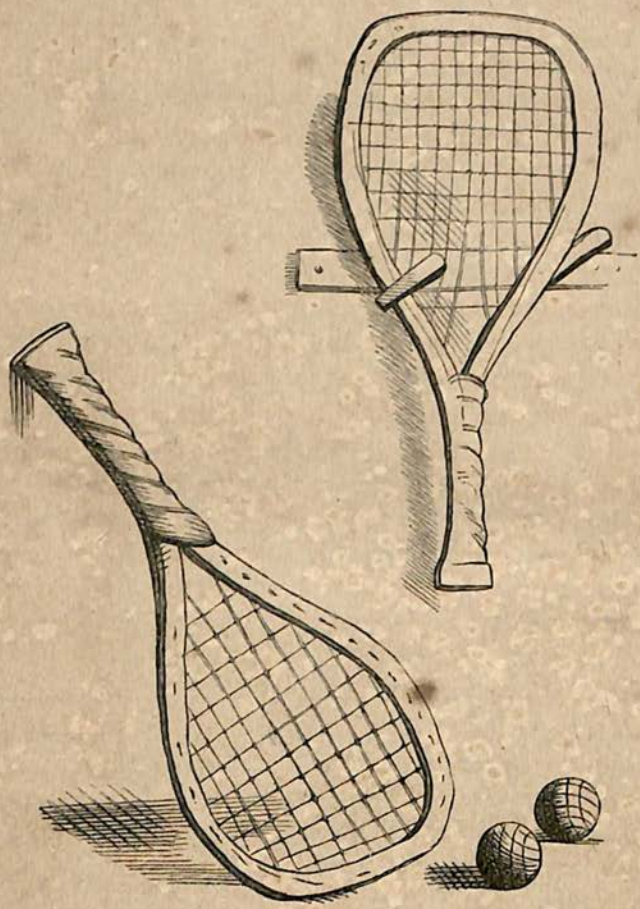


FIG. 8.

passage from Colomiés : ' J'ai ouï dire à M. Chapelain qu'un de ses amis, homme de lettres, avait joué à la longue paume avec un battoir sur lequel se voyaient des fragments de quelques décades de Tite Live que nous n'avons pas, et que ces fragments venaient d'un apoticaire qui, ayant en don des religieuses de Fontevrault plusieurs volumes en parchemin du même auteur, les avait vendus par ignorance à un faiseur de raquettes.'

Fig. 8 is taken from a work by Mitelli, an Italian artist, who painted in Bologna in 1675. Although a mere sketch, it is evidently the work of a skilled draughtsman, and is probably an accurate representation of the racket used in those days.

Fig. 9 shows the changes that were effected in the course of a century. We find that in De Garsault's time, 1767, the middle-piece was used, and the racket, though wanting in finish, differed but slightly from a modern implement. What appears in the engraving to be a transverse rod is a wire bridle, in those days carried round the hoop, for the purpose of preventing loss of shape.

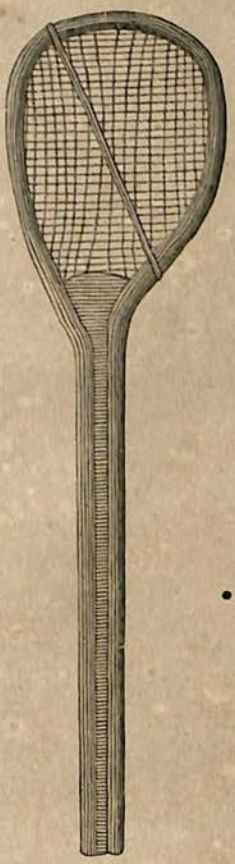


FIG. 9.

Fig. 10 shows a racket such as we now use, which is as nearly perfect as is possible; indeed, its very perfection has been said by some players to have caused deterioration of the game of Tennis, which has become so fast that the balance between activity and skill is less evenly adjusted than it was in the past. A new departure was made in or about 1857. Before that time the cross-strings were looped round the main-strings, but it was found that when these were threaded through them, the racket so strung would drive the ball much faster, and,

although its smoother face prevented accurate and precise placing, that it would impart cut quite as severe as those of the former type. This led to a revolution in Tennis; whether it led to an improvement or not may be questioned, but in Tennis, as in other things, 'vestigia nulla retrorsum.' If a golf club were invented which would drive a ball a quarter of a mile, the inventor would realise a fortune. If a new system of choke-boring enabled the sportsman to kill birds at 100 yards, our breech-loaders would find their way to the lumber-room; but it may be doubted if golf or sport would be improved. Naturally, however, all players adopted the new method of stringing, and, in 1867, when the best play was seen in the court at Lord's, even those who were most inclined 'stare super antiquas vias' had been constrained to accommodate their style of play to the modern implements.

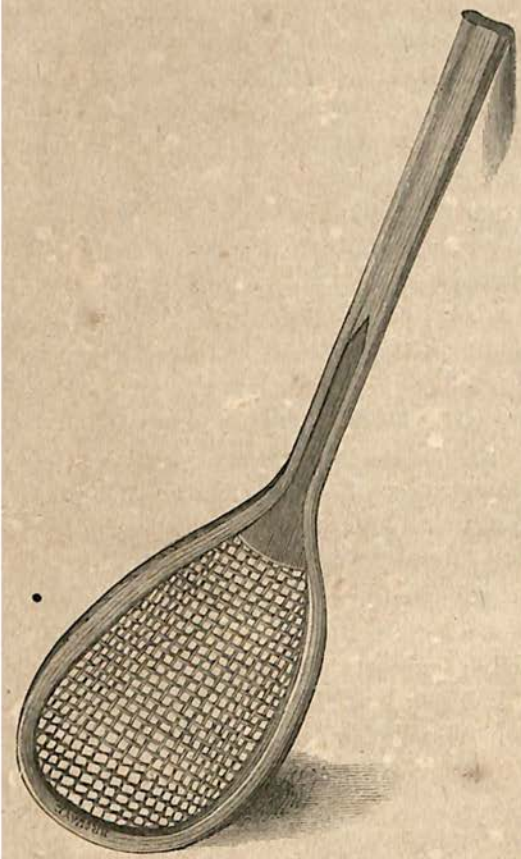


FIG. 10.

## THE BALL

The ball used in the French *jeux* was formerly known by the name *esteuf* (even the silver ball, or blue riband of the game, was called *l'esteuf d'argent*),[1] probably because they were made of *estouffes*, or *estoupes*, de laine (Lat. *stupa*), (Gr. στυππεῖον στύππη).

Adulteration was not unknown in those days. M. Fournier[2] writes, 'Les paumiers-raquettiers, qui trouvaient la laine un peu chère, mettaient dans les balles tout ce qu'ils trouvaient, surtout du son [bran]. Une ordonnance royale (Louis XI.) leur rappela les devoirs du métier. Elle leur enjoignit de ne mettre en vente que des éteufs couverts de bon cuir et remplis de bonne bourre' (cow's hair). That Tennis balls were stuffed with hair in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is shown by Mr. Marshall,[3] who quotes from 'A Wonderful, Strange, and Miraculous Astrological Prognostication for the Year of our Lord 1591,' written by Nashe, 'They may sell their haire by the pound to stuffe tennice-balls.' Again, in 'Ram Alley, or Merry Tricks, 1611': 'Thy beard shall serve to stuff those balls by which I get me heat at tennice.' Towards the end of the seventeenth century cotton appears to have been used in the composition of balls,[4] for we read in Shadwell's 'True Widow,' 1679, Act ii., *Prig*: 'Methinks that old song is very pretty.

> My mistress is a tennis ball,
> Composed of cotten fine.'

These balls were covered with sheep skin or some sort of leather. In Spain, where the courts were white, black balls

[1] Two perfect specimens of this trophy are in the possession of Mr. Julian Marshall. They are silver balls of French manufacture, hollow, about the size of a Tennis ball. One is rather larger than the other, and was made in 1771 or 1772. The smaller ball is evidently at least sixty or eighty years older, but the marks on it have disappeared under the hands of successive cleaners and polishers.

[2] *Le Jeu de Paume*, p. 8. [3] *Annals of Tennis*, p. 72. [4] *Ib.*, p. 85.

were used; in this country, and in France, where the *tripots* were always coloured black, the balls were white.

In the course of the next hundred years ball-making appears to have undergone a radical change. Hair, cotton, and leather were superseded by strips of woollen material rolled tightly into a spherical form, tied with string, and covered with white cloth, and the result was a ball rather smaller, rather lighter, and less carefully finished; but in other respects similar to those we now use.

Indeed, balls made as described by De Garsault in 1767, if fairly used, kept in a dry place, and re-covered from time to time, are almost perennial; balls are in use now in Paris which are said to have been made 70 years ago, and which may be expected to last some years more.

The best Tennis balls that are used in England are supplied by A. Tompkins & Co., 68 Upper Lewes Road, Brighton. These are made entirely of woollen material, and are covered with white Melton cloth, which is made expressly for the purpose at Leeds. The weight of one of these balls is $2\frac{1}{2}$ oz., the diameter $2\frac{3}{16}$ in. It is hardly necessary to urge the importance of maintaining one standard of size, weight, and elasticity, but a cloth of a finer and closer texture may be used for the covering of balls to be played with in a slow court, while for those to be used in a fast court a softer material may be selected.

It is to be regretted that the Americans, who have recently taken up Tennis with characteristic enterprise and spirit, should have failed to recognise the importance of accepting a standard which has stood the test of 100 years, and which now gives satisfaction to all experts. The balls first made at Boston were small, light, and composed entirely of cotton; but as these are no longer used, they apparently failed to give satisfaction. The American balls are now of the same size and approximately of the same weight as the English balls, but, being made of alternate layers of cloth and cotton, are much slower, as the result of the following experiments demonstrates. When dropped on

to the floor from the lower edge of the pent-house, a height of 7 ft. 2 in., the English ball bounds to a height of 2 ft. 6 in.; an English ball, at least 20 years old, 2 ft. 3 in., the American ball, 2 ft. 2½ in., or, taking 1 as the coefficient of elasticity of the English ball, that of the ball of former days is ·9, and that of the American ball, ·88; an appreciable difference, which necessarily affects the flight of the ball after it touches the walls or floor.

If this slow ball was adopted with a view of checking the tendency to fast play, and bringing modern Tennis more in harmony with the traditions of past ages, the intention is to be commended; but the durability and trustworthiness of the ball are liable to be endangered by the want of homogeneity in the material used, and the absence of a pivot which alone can give stability to the centre of gravity. In any case, the step is a retrogressive one, which will not readily find favour with young players.

# CHAPTER III

## MODERN TENNIS

When we have match'd our rackets to these balls
We will . . . . play a set.

SHAKSPEARE, *Henry V.*, Act i. sc. 2

A BALL-GAME OF MODERN TIME

WE may not wish to encourage our wives and daughters to emulate Nausicaa, Margot, Mademoiselle Bunel, or Madame Masson, and to compete with us in an exercise fatiguing to all, and to them possibly dangerous, but we accord to them a hearty welcome when they honour the 'dedans' with their presence. Some

ladies, indeed, have shown that the difficulty of understanding Tennis is not insuperable; some are thoroughly appreciative of a good stroke, and keenly enjoy a well-contested match. But the following are examples of some strange solecisms I have heard. A lady once asked me what was kept in the *yellow cupboard*, in the opposite corner of the court. Another asked, 'What are *discs*, and how do you take them?' tempting me to reply 'cum grano,' or 'two at bed-time.' Another lady, who for the first time visited the 'dedans' at Lord's, after watching the play for some time, naïvely remarked to her companion, 'Why, they mark at this game just as they do at *tennis*!'

Nor is this want of familiarity with the game confined to our 'sisters and our cousins.' In the presence of a circle of gentlemen, some of whom were acquaintances and others strangers to me, the question was put to me, 'For how many years were you amateur champion?' I replied, 'The date could not be accurately fixed, but that I was generally credited with the enjoyment of that honour for twenty-three years.' Bewilderment and incredulity caused each particular hair on the head of one of the company to stand on end, and he was evidently saying to himself, 'Renshaw I know, and Lawford I know, but who is this?' For the moment he appeared to be doubting if he were dreaming, or if I were an impostor of more than ordinary assurance, but at last, in tones of quiet remonstrance, he said, 'I did not know that the game had been invented so long as that.'

Hoping that a perusal of these pages may prevent a repetition of such misconceptions as these, I will here offer a description of a modern Tennis court, and a fuller interpretation of the terms used in the game than can be given in the appendix.

Fig. 11 represents the interior of the Tennis court at the Queen's Club, West Kensington, as seen from the hazard-side. The numbers indicate the component parts of the court on the service-side.

1 is the end-pent-house.
2 „ side-pent-house.
3 „ end-wall.
4 „ main-wall.
5 „ side-wall.
6 „ battery.
7 „ gallery for spectators.
8 is the play-line.
9 „ dedans.
10 „ last-gallery.
11 „ second-gallery.
12 „ door.
13 „ first-gallery.
14 „ line-opening.
15 „ half-court-line

That part of the court which is enclosed by the main-wall, the end-wall, the half-court-line, and the net is called the fore-hand court; the remainder of the court on the service-side is called the back-hand court.

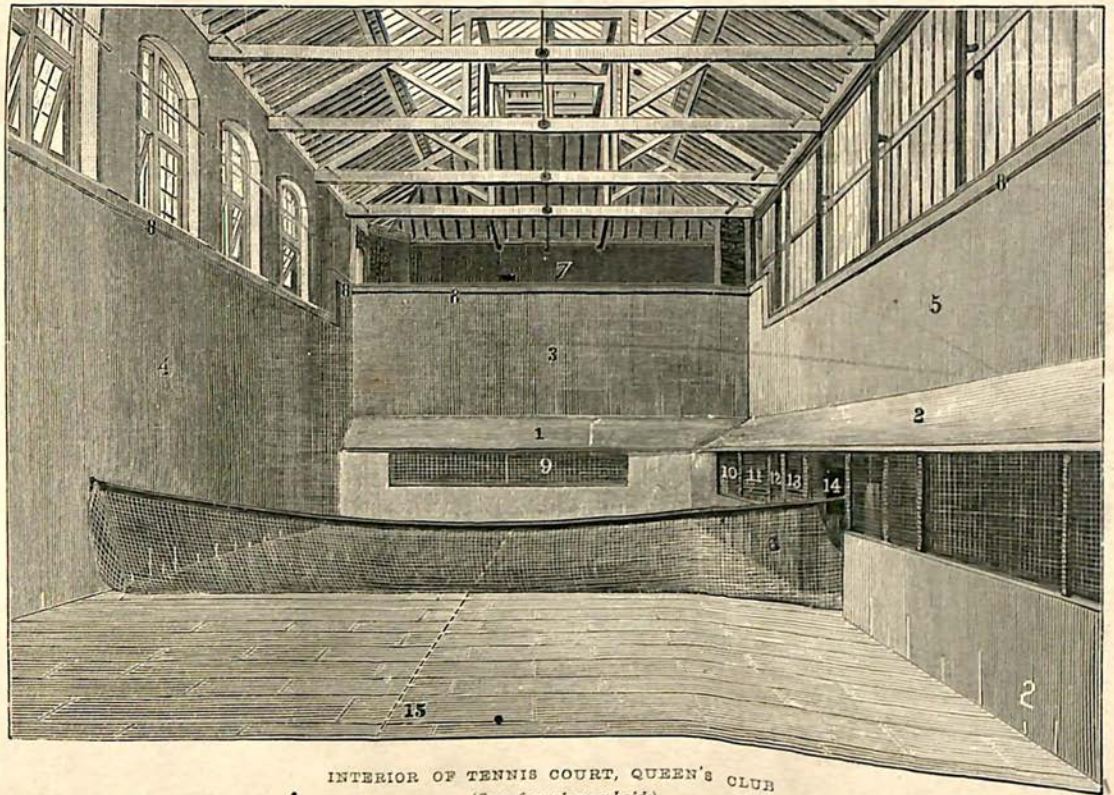
Fig. 12 represents the interior of the same court as seen from the service-side; the numbers indicate the component parts of the hazard-side.

1 is the end-pent-house.
2 „ side-pent-house.
3 „ end-wall.
4 „ main-wall.
5 „ battery.
6 „ side-wall.
7 „ tambour.
8 „ play-line.
9 is the grille.
10 „ last-gallery.
11 „ second-gallery.
12 „ door.
13 „ first-gallery.
14 „ line-opening.
15 „ half-court-line.

That part of the court which is enclosed by the battery, the end-wall, the half-court-line, and the net is called the fore-hand court. The remainder of the court on the hazard-side is called the back-hand court.

Attention must next be called to the floor, on which are painted certain lines.

THE HALF-COURT-LINE is drawn parallel with the side-walls, dividing the court lengthways into two equal parts (except where the projection of the tambour reduces the area of the hazard-side). It is used only when the odds of 'half-court' are given.




INTERIOR OF TENNIS COURT, QUEEN'S CLUB

*(Seen from hazard-side)*

THE SERVICE-LINE is drawn parallel with the end-wall on the hazard-side at a distance of twenty-one feet from it.

THE PASS-LINE is drawn from the service-line to the end-wall, parallel with the half-court-line at a distance of seven feet from it.

The area enclosed by the 'service-line,' the 'pass-line,' the 'end-wall,' and the 'side-wall' is called the 'service-court.' The area enclosed by the 'pass-line,' the 'service-line,' the 'end-wall,' and the 'main-wall' is called the 'pass-court.'

THE CHASE-LINES are drawn parallel with the end-walls. *On the service-side* the line nearest to the end-wall is half-a-yard from it, the second a yard, the third a yard and a half, the fourth two yards, and so on up to six yards. These lines indicate the 'chases,' half-a-yard, a yard, 1 and 2, 2, 2 and 3, 3, 3 and 4, 4, 4 and 5, 5, 5 and 6, 6. The chase-line, 'half-a-yard worse than 6,' divides the distance between 6 and the next line, 'last-gallery,' which indicates a chase equivalent to that opening. The next line is 'a yard worse than the last-gallery,' and lines are drawn indicating chases, 'second-gallery,' the 'door,' and the 'first-gallery,' and also lines midway between these lines, which show whether a chase is 'worse than a yard worse' or better than the 'second-gallery,' &c. *On the hazard-side* there are no chase-lines in the service-court, the first-line is half-a-yard from the service-line, the second a yard, the third a yard and a half, the fourth two yards, and there are lines which mark chases equivalent to the openings, 'second-gallery,' the 'door,' and the 'first-gallery,' are also lines midway between these lines.

The chases indicated by these lines are called 'hazard-side half-a-yard,' 'hazard-side a yard,' &c.

THE CHASE.—An expression which is, to the uninitiated, what the 'Rule in Shelley's case' is to the law student, may be thus explained. When the server mistrusts his ability to return the first or any subsequent stroke of a 'rest,'[1] or when he

[1] The following statistics, which were published in the *Field* in July, 1889, supply an answer to a question which has often been put, 'What is the average

perceives that the ball will 'fall' far before it reaches the end-wall, or will return far from it, making in either case what is called a 'long chase,' he makes no effort to return it; the marker observes where the ball 'falls' and calls a chase at the spot where it has 'fallen': e.g. if the ball falls on the 2 line, he calls 'chase 2;' if in the interval between '1 and 2' and 2, he calls 'better than 2'; if in the interval between 2 and '2 and 3,' he calls 'worse than 2,' &c. No stroke is scored, but the opponents 'change sides,' and 'play for the chase.' The player who made the chase — now the 'server' — tries to 'defend' it; his antagonist, now the 'striker-out,' tries to win it. A chase is *won* if the ball enters the dedans, or if it 'falls' nearer to the end-wall than the ball which made the chase fell; it is *lost* if the ball 'falls' further from the end-wall than the

length of a "rest" at Tennis?' They are the result of a careful observation taken by the reporter of three matches, which may be considered typical illustrations of attack and defence.

1. C. Saunders (giving 15 for a bisque) *v.* Mr. A. Lyttelton.
2. Mr. A. Lyttelton *v.* Sir E. Grey (even).
3. Mr. E. Crawley *v.* Mr. W. Cazalet (even).

In the first of these matches, there were in the

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1st set, | 159 rests, | 598 strokes. |
| 2nd set, | 95 rests, | 440 strokes. |
| 3rd set, | 72 rests, | 269 strokes; average, 4·01. |

In the second, there were in the

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1st set, | 100 rests, | 380 strokes. |
| 2nd set, | 89 rests, | 397 strokes. |
| 3rd set, | 59 rests, | 227 strokes. |
| 4th set, | 84 rests, | 326 strokes; average, 4·006. |

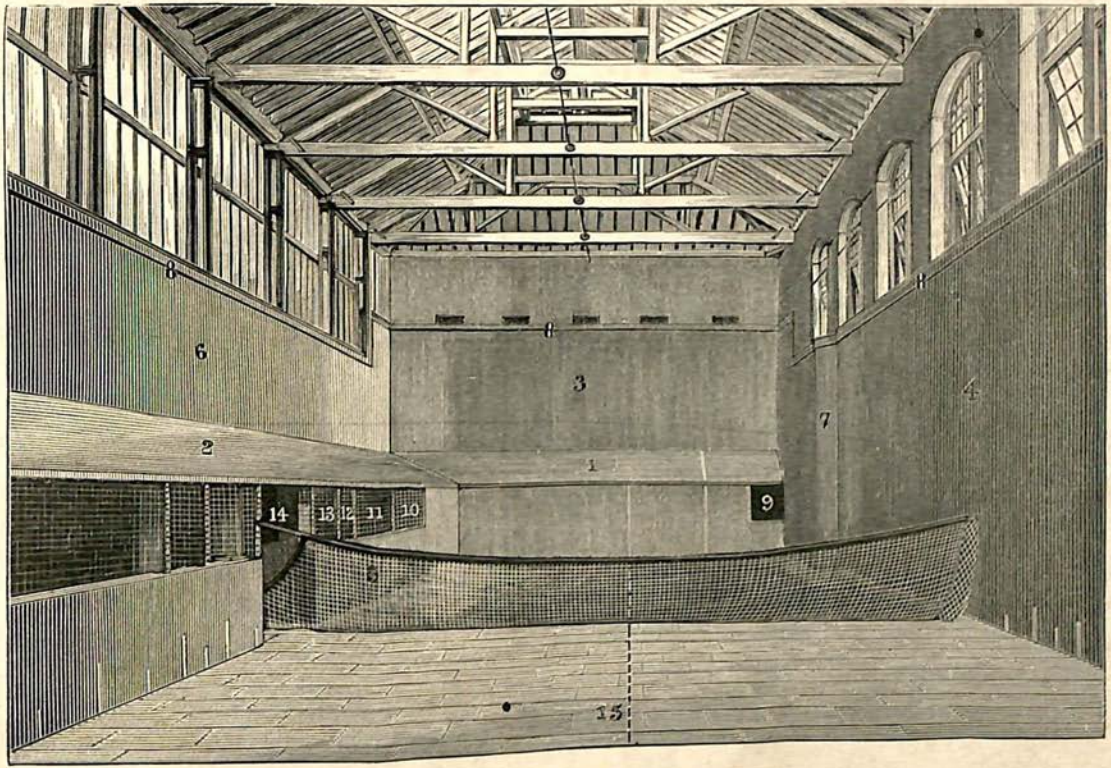
In the third, there were in the

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1st set, | 57 rests, | 219 strokes. |
| 2nd set, | 96 rests, | 409 strokes. |
| 3rd set, | 69 rests, | 248 strokes. |
| 4th set, | 64 rests, | 239 strokes. |
| 5th set, | 88 rests, | 394 strokes; average, 4·03. |

The service, if not touched, is counted as one stroke.

The return of the service, and of each subsequent return, whether successful or unsuccessful, is also counted as one stroke.

The longest rest played in these matches consisted of 17 strokes. Longer rests, of which, however, we have no trustworthy record, have undoubtedly occurred, but it is seldom that return is repeated more than twenty times.




INTERIOR OF TENNIS COURT, QUEEN'S CLUB

*(Seen from service-side)*

ball which made the chase fell. When this principle is fully grasped, the rules which apply to 'gallery chases,' 'hazard-side chases,' and 'chase-off,' which are given in laws 17-23, will present no difficulty.

THE CUT.—As the winner of a chase scores one stroke (or 15), it is sufficiently obvious that the key to success at Tennis is to make 'short chases,' i.e. to play the ball so that it shall 'fall' as near as possible to the end-wall. This object can best be attained by *cutting* the ball, or striking it with a racket held at an angle of about 45° with the floor.

A ball so struck will rotate on its vertical axis until it 'drops,' will have a slight tendency to rise abruptly after it has 'dropped,' and when it reaches the end-wall, will 'fall' with great rapidity and apparent inelasticity. This stroke is the essence of pure Tennis; for the ball, if well 'cut,' may be played so that it shall drop close to the end-wall, and still make a 'close chase,' presenting no opportunity for return except by strokes which will presently be explained—the 'volley,' the 'half-volley,' or the 'coup de temps.'

TWIST.—Horizontal spin may also be imparted to the ball (with or without cut); producing 'under-hand' or 'over-hand' twist. The former of these is caused when the racket is held obliquely with regard to its vertical as well as its horizontal position, and the head is moved from right to left when the stroke is made. A ball so struck will rotate on its horizontal axis from left to right. Conversely, to produce 'over-hand' twist, which will cause the ball to spin from right to left, the head of the racket, which should be above the wrist of the striker, must be moved from right to left. This stroke is a valuable auxiliary to a player who is giving 'touch-no-walls,' or 'side-walls,' but a tendency to twist habitually is a sure indication of a wrong position or a faulty style of holding the racket, and should be discouraged.

THE SERVICE.—The spin produced by 'cut' or 'twist,' or the two combined, gives infinite variety to the service, but all these countless variations emanate from the three typical

openings, the 'side-wall service,' the 'under-hand twist,' and the 'drop.' To deliver the *side-wall service* effectually the server should stand near to the main wall at about the '4 line,' and play the ball so that it shall first strike the side-wall above the hazard-side last-gallery, then strike the pent-house, and drop in the service-court near to the end-wall. 'Cut' applied to the ball will cause it to 'fall' on to the floor with great rapidity; over-hand twist, which will cause the ball to cling to the end-wall and force the striker-out into the pass-court, is valuable; but under-hand twist, which will have a tendency to make the ball return towards the middle of the court, will neutralize its efficacy.

*The under-hand-twist service* is given with the object of getting a 'nick.' The server should stand near to the side pent-house, at about the '3 line,' and play the ball so that it shall strike the pent-house once only and 'drop' thence into the service-court. If it drops in the junction of the wall with the floor, an unreturnable 'dead-nick' is the result; if it strikes the end-wall a few inches above the floor, it makes a 'half-nick,' which can best be met by a 'boast' against the side-wall into the fore-hand court on the service-side; if it drops on the floor before it reaches the end-wall, it will return towards the side-wall, to which it will cling closely or may even fall in the last-gallery. But a failure to attain one of these objects leaves the whole court open to attack. The facility with which left-handed players can deliver this service is perhaps the only advantage they enjoy. They can impart over-hand twist, which corresponds to the under-hand twist of a right-handed player, with lightning speed, and fully justify the epithets 'railroad' or *chemin de fer*, which have often been applied to this service. Fig. 13 shows Pettitt in the act of delivering this service and imparting such under-hand twist as he alone can impart. The 'giraffe,' a branch of the under-hand-twist service, is delivered from the same part of the court as the last-mentioned service. If sufficient elevation is given, and the ball powerfully twisted, it will drop near to the 'pass-line,' and may even bound into

the 'grille.' Barre in former times was, and Saunders now is, a perfect exponent of this beautiful and interesting opening of the game.

In the *drop-service* the ball, spinning from right to left, appears to lose all its elasticity when it strikes the pent-house, and if strong over-hand twist is imparted to it, it can scarcely

FIG. 13.—J. PETTITT DELIVERING UNDER-HAND-TWIST SERVICES

be returned except by a volley. The server should stand near to the main-wall and deliver the service so that the ball shall drop from a high elevation on to the side-pent-house, not far from its junction with the end-pent-house. Few players, however, can persevere in this service throughout a match, for the subsequent rapid change of position should the ball be returned

into the back-hand corner, and the exertion required to 'put on twist,' are a strain on the strongest muscles, but it is a valuable resource in critical junctures.

*On Striking Out.*—The objects of the player who returns the service are either to make a 'close chase,' to 'win a chase,' or

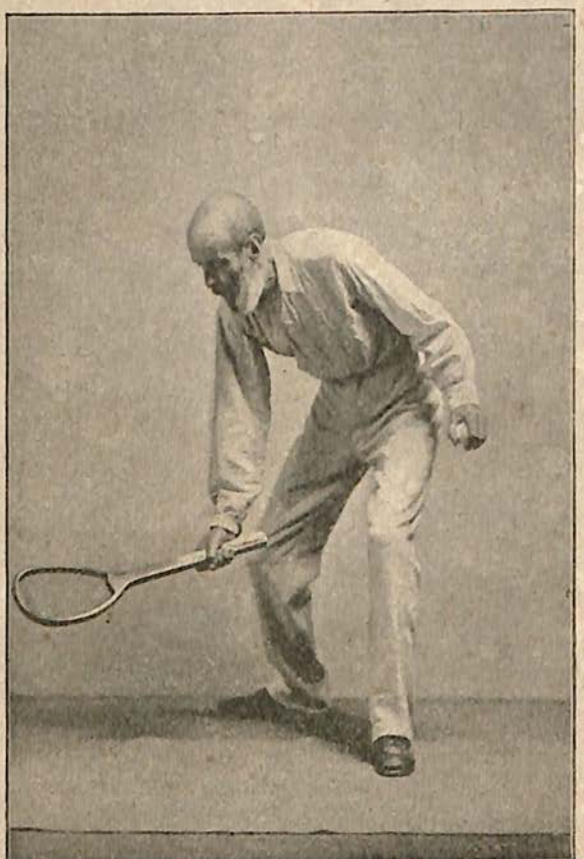


FIG. 14.—MR. J. M. HEATHCOTE CUTTING THE BALL FORE-HANDED

to 'force for the dedans.' The exigencies of the moment must determine how a chase is to be made or won, but for play on the floor 'fore-hand cut,' which is illustrated in Fig. 14, is

almost, if not quite, a *sine quâ non*. The 'cut' may be emphasized by a slight turn of the wrist and a partial check of the forward movement of the racket at the moment the ball is struck, but these subtle refinements are difficult and dangerous, and should be resorted to with caution. The 'side-

FIG. 15.—C. SAUNDERS VOLLEYING THE SERVICE FROM THE PENT-HOUSE

wall' and 'drop' services have been robbed of some of their terrors by a feature of modern Tennis—the volley from the pent-house into the corner of the opposite fore-hand court. This

stroke had been seldom practised until Mr. Gerald Balfour found that services which the narrow and steep pent-house of the Cambridge court made unusually difficult could be returned in this manner, and his example was speedily followed by Mr.

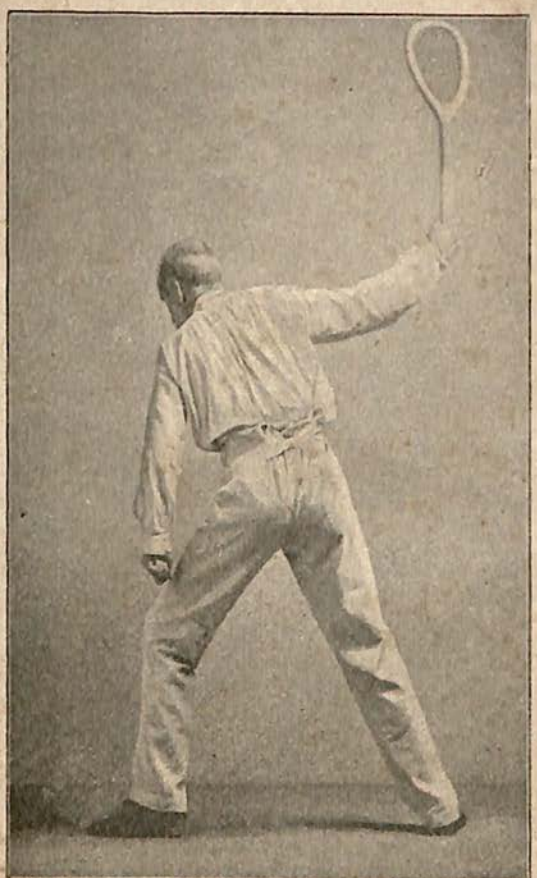


FIG. 16.—MR. J. M. HEATHCOTE FORCING FORE-HANDED

Ivo Bligh, Mr. A. Lyttelton, and other Cambridge players. Fig. 15 illustrates the position of Saunders when making this beautiful stroke, of which he is the best living exponent.

*The Force* is the usual resource of a player who must try to

win at very 'close chase,' or who returns a ball which comes 'fair-off' from the end-wall. Cut impedes rather than aids the speed of the 'direct force,' which should be driven with a full swing of the arm, every muscle of every part of the body being

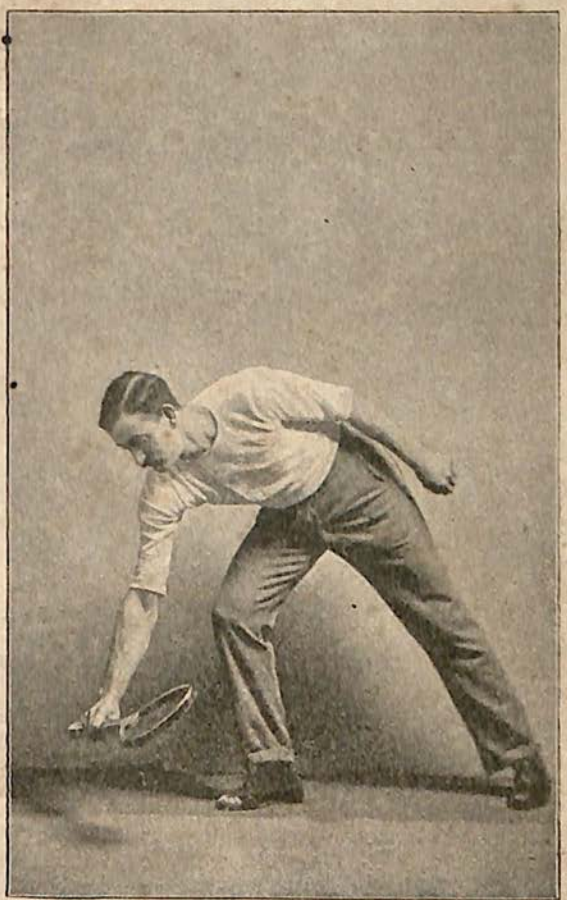


FIG. 17.—C. SAUNDERS CUTTING THE BALL BACK-HANDED

brought into action; but twist materially enhances the difficulty of a successful 'stop,' and 'cut,' or over-hand twist, will make a 'boasted force' more than ever formidable. It is impossible

to force as severely, difficult to force as accurately, with a back-hand as with a fore-hand stroke, but the intention of the player is more easily masked, and the ball arriving unexpectedly, if less swiftly, often baffles the most experienced volleyer. Fig.

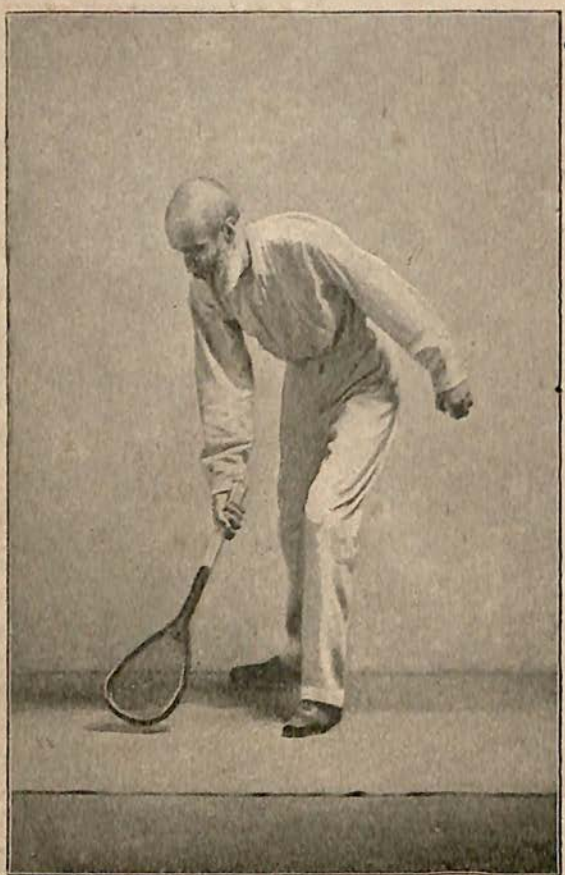


FIG. 18.—MR. J. M. HEATHCOTE HALF-VOLLEYING FORE-HANDED

16 shows the position of a player about to force for the dedans or grille.

ON RETURN.—The ball may be 'returned' fore-hand or back-hand in its bound (or at the 'long hop'), by the 'volley,'

the 'half-volley,' or the 'coup-de-temps.' A player should, by a timely advance or retreat, try to avail himself of the first of these methods, as he will thus be enabled to force, or to place, or to cut the ball, and so convert defence into attack. Fig.

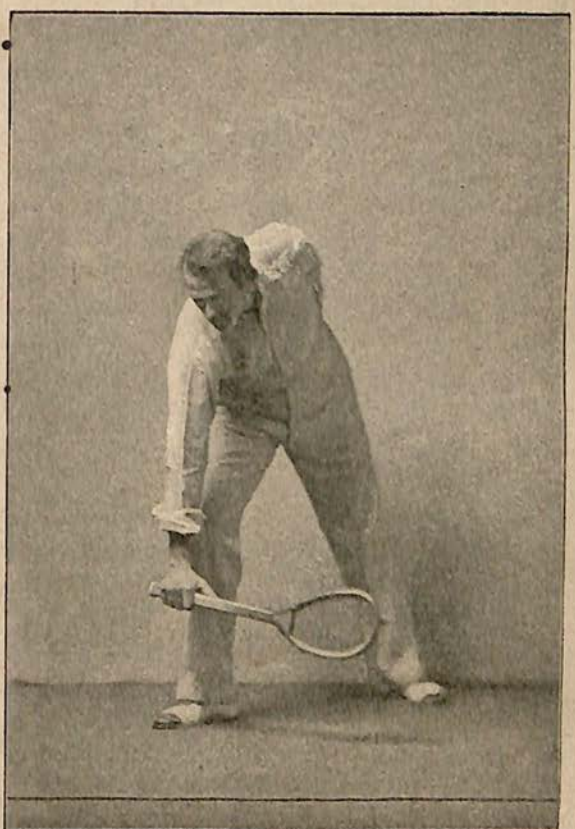


FIG. 19.—MR. A LYTTELTON HALF-VOLLEYING BACK-HANDED (FRONT VIEW)

17 shows Saunders returning a ball back-handed with cut into the fore-hand corner of the opposite court.

*The Volley.*—The apparent facility of 'hitting a full-pitch' has led many a young player to underrate the difficulty of this stroke, but since it is indispensable for the defence of the

dedans, and frequently useful in the return of balls, which, if allowed to drop, would present difficulty, its importance cannot be overrated. The player should observe his opponent's stroke, that he may judge the speed of the ball and anticipate twist

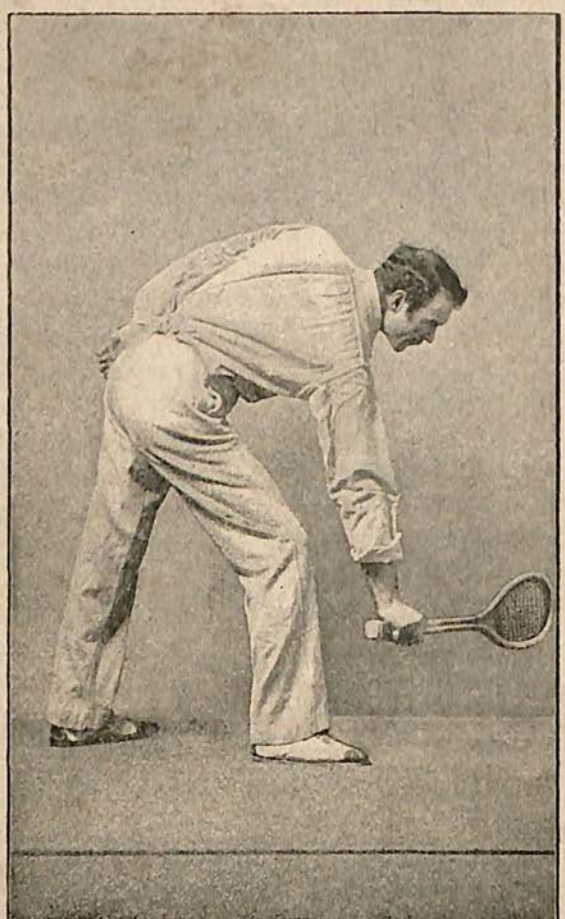


FIG. 20.—MR. A. LYTTELTON HALF-VOLLEYING BACK-HANDED (SIDE VIEW

that may have been imparted; he should grasp his racket firmly, and should avoid striking at the ball with more than necessary force.

The *half-volley* should be the last resource of a player, for except by accident, cut is never imparted by this stroke, and accurate placing is nearly impossible. Many balls, however, can be returned in no other way, and the graceful posture assumed by the 'half-volleyer,' and the brilliant, if sometimes unexpected, results of this stroke, have always made it popular in the dedans, and have evoked for it hearty, if occasionally undeserved, plaudits.

Figs. 18, 19, and 20 illustrate the fore-hand and back-hand half-volley.

The *coup de temps* is the 'positively last' resource of a player who *must* return the ball or lose a stroke. A really fine player will occasionally startle spectators by the sympathy of nerve and muscle and intuitive perception which enable him to return an almost 'impossible' stroke, but such *tours de force* must be seen to be appreciated, for they cannot be described.

The tiro, who for the first time enters the dedans of a Tennis court, must not be disappointed if he fails to fathom the intention of the players in each successive stroke, and to grasp every detail of the game; but it is hoped that this exegesis, and a perusal of laws 3—10, which define the 'service,' 11—13, which relate to 'return,' and 14—27, which explain the system of scoring and of marking 'chases,' will enable him to comprehend why some apparently easy balls are left alone, while superhuman efforts are made to return others which seem to be more difficult, to follow with interest the progress of a set at Tennis, and to realise that the day may not be far distant when he may become conversant with the more abstruse refinements of the game.

ON GIVING ODDS.—There is no game in which disparity of skill between the players can be neutralised by the adjustment of odds so well as in Tennis. Golf-players may, perhaps, challenge this statement; but in that game the individual skill of one player is pitted not so much against the individual skill of the other player, as against the hazards which have been created by nature or by art; while in Tennis, the receipt of

points, or, if necessary, of 'cramped odds' in addition to points, will invest with interest the actual game between a champion and a tiro.

A 'BISQUE,' or a stroke which may be claimed at any time in a set by the recipient, is the smallest point of odds usually given. One or more bisques may be given or received in augmentation of, or diminution of, other odds, e.g. half-fifteen and two bisques, half-court for a bisque, κ.τ.λ.

A bisque, when taken, wins not only a stroke, but also a chase which has been established; its value, therefore, is considerably in excess of one stroke: an approximate estimate of that excess may be thus made. It is generally admitted that two bisques are equivalent to half-fifteen for a bisque, hence we may infer that half-fifteen = 3 bisques, fifteen = 6 bisques, thirty = 12 bisques. I have on more than one occasion, as an experiment, given 12 bisques to an opponent to whom I was able to give thirty, and have found that the equation, as might be expected, held good. Now, a set may be determined in six games, it may be protracted to eleven, or, in the case of an advantage set, to more than eleven games. In the first case the recipient of half-fifteen receives three strokes, in the second five or more. Ten games may be taken as an average length of a set, so the recipient of half-fifteen will, on an average, receive five strokes, and the value of three bisques may be thus estimated at five strokes. It is a time-honoured maxim that a giver of odds should take a bisque to save a game, a receiver of odds should do so in order to win a game. The exceptions are rare, but some players would not hesitate to save, or secure the ninth game of set, when the score stood at four game all.

HALF-FIFTEEN, or one stroke given at the beginning of the second and every subsequent alternate game of a set.

FIFTEEN, or one stroke at the beginning of every game of a set.

HALF-THIRTY, or one stroke at the beginning of the first game, two strokes at the beginning of the second game, and so on alternately in all subsequent games of a set.

THIRTY, or two strokes at the beginning of every game of a set.

HALF-FORTY, or two strokes at the beginning of the first game, three strokes at the beginning of the second game, and so on alternately in all subsequent games of a set.

FORTY, or three strokes at the beginning of every game of a set.

ROUND-SERVICES.—See Law 31, Chap. IV., p. 68. The giver should minimise the penalty by imparting some twist to the service, but he must be prepared to act on the defensive at the commencement of each rest, and will find that these odds are equivalent to about fifteen for a bisque.

BAR THE DEDANS, BAR THE WINNING OPENINGS, BAR THE OPENINGS.—The giver of the first-named of these odds loses a stroke if a ball returned by him enters the 'dedans'; of the second, if the ball returned by him enters the 'dedans,' the grille, or the last-gallery on the hazard-side; of the third, if the ball returned by him enters the dedans, the grille, or any of the galleries, or touches a gallery-post.

If the competitors are of equal strength, the worth of the dedans may be half-fifteen and a bisque; of the winning openings, fifteen for a bisque; of all the openings, fifteen and a bisque; but the value of these odds is by no means constant, and is much diminished if they are given in augmentation of points. A player who is strong enough to give thirty to his opponent should confine his play to the 'floor'; indeed, some players would give thirty and the dedans in preference to thirty and a bisque, thirty and the openings in preference to thirty and two bisques.

HALF-COURT, see Law 32, Chap. IV., p. 68.

SIDE-WALLS.—The giver of these odds loses a stroke if a ball returned by him touches (before it has fallen) a side-wall or a gallery-post, or enters a gallery. He is not precluded from playing the ball on to the pent-house. The value of half-court or side-walls may be estimated at half-thirty and a bisque.

TOUCH-NO-WALLS.—The giver of these odds loses a stroke

if a ball returned by him touches (before it has fallen) a wall or a gallery-post, or enters an opening. He is not precluded from playing the ball on to the pent-house. These difficult odds, which are equivalent to nearly, if not quite, forty,[1] require accurate judgment and a delicate manipulation of the racket to a greater extent than any other form of Tennis, and are replete with interest to the giver and to the recipient.

A few words are necessary on the duties of that useful official of a Tennis court, the marker. An incompetent or careless marker tests the equanimity of the most long-suffering and good-tempered player. Even a good marker is sometimes addressed in choleric words by a splenetic player who fancies himself aggrieved by an adverse decision. A first-rate marker must, therefore, be gifted with patience, decision of character, power of concentrating his attention on his work, a voice clear and audible, but not too obtrusive, and physical strength that will enable him to stand at his post for protracted periods, and in all weathers. His duties are to call 'fault' or 'pass' as occasion requires; to call the state of the game after each stroke; to mark the chases when made, and, when necessary, to direct the players to change sides, and to decide all doubtful and disputed strokes. Such strokes must occur from time to time; the most capable marker may, like Lord Eldon, doubt, or the interposition of the racket or the body of a player may even interfere with his sight of the ball, and in such emergencies the duty of the marker has never been clearly defined. In some courts he remains silent until the 'rest' is played out, when an appeal may be made to the 'dedans,' or to the umpires,

[1] These equivalents are based on the results of frequent experiments made in the course of many years, with a view of testing questions which have always been interesting to me. In the *Annals of Tennis*, p. 159 *n.*, Mr. Marshall, who collected the opinions of many eminent players, writes: 'The value of the ordinary cramped-odds, though varying with different players, is usually estimated as follows: Round-services = 15, or nearly half-thirty; half-court = half-thirty; touch-no-side-walls = half-thirty, and perhaps a bisque; touch-no-walls = about 40; bar the hazard (i.e. the winning openings) = about 15; bar the openings = 15 and a bisque, or nearly half-thirty.

should any have been appointed; in others he calls 'play,' 'double,' 'out-of-court,' &c., when the stroke is made. Perhaps the best system in these cases is that he should call 'play it out,' and that at the end of the rest the appeal should be made either by himself or by the player against whom he has given his decision. In all recent important matches two umpires and a referee have been appointed; this course has given general satisfaction, and is unquestionably better than the older system of collecting the votes of all spectators who have formed an opinion, and accepting their verdict as final. The marker should also be thoroughly versed in all practical duties connected with the repair of rackets and balls, he should be a competent instructor, and a player of sufficient strength to be able to hold his own with all but the strongest amateurs.

J. Fennell, best known as 'Jimmie,' the marker at Lord's, is the best living exponent, of unerring accuracy, both as regards scoring the game and making chases. John Tompkins at Brighton, Peter Latham and Holden at the Queen's Club, West Kensington, Harradine at Cambridge, Alfred White at the Duke of Fife's, Ted Johnson at Lord Wimborne's, are all excellent markers. The first-named of these, John Tompkins, was in the meridian of his life a very strong player, and the honours won by Latham at rackets, his youth and activity, and his accurate and graceful style, may justify his friends in predicting for him a brilliant career in the Tennis court.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE LAWS OF TENNIS

Ignorantia legis excusat neminem.—*Legal Maxim*

PERHAPS there is nothing that better illustrates the excellence of the common law of Tennis than the fact that the statute law, as we now have it, embodies nearly all the principles of the game as played in the earliest times of which we have any record. Messer Antonio Scaino da Salò, a priest and doctor of theology, born 1524 A.D., is the earliest author on the subject to whom reference will be made. The 'Trattato della Palla' written by him in 1555 fully explains the system of scoring the game by four strokes (each stroke counting fifteen), and the terms *a due* and *vantaggio*, from which our now familiar terms 'deuce' and 'advantage' are derived. This treatise also gives a history of 'chases,' their development, and the laws relating to them which then existed. In *Longue Paume* a *caccia*, from which the French *chasse* and the English 'chase' are derived, was equivalent to the mark or marking of a ball that is sent or pursued (*cacciata*), and was formerly indicated by a piquet or standard placed at the spot where the ball ceased to roll, or was stopped after it had touched the ground a second time. But in the *Tripots* the practice of marking the 'chase' where the ball touched the floor after its first bound soon became general, a custom highly commended by Scaino, inasmuch as it encouraged players to cut (*tagliare*) the ball.

But, although interesting from an historical point of view, Scaino's records do not show the laws of the game as then

played, nor does the 'Ordonnance' made in Paris in 1592, printed in 1632 by C. Hulpean, and reprinted in the Maison Académique in 1659; but we there learn that Tennis, which in Scaino's time was played by the game of four strokes, was then played by the set of four games—i.e. the best of seven games. That this practice was subsequently maintained is abundantly shown in M. de Garsault's treatise,[1] in which is also made the first mention of the last-gallery on the 'hazard-side' as a 'winning opening,' and of the 'chase lines,' fourteen in number, marked on the floor as they are at the present time. The excellent and practical essay by Barcellon, written in 1800, tells us that by this time the set was in Paris played the best of fifteen games, as is still the custom abroad, and his reflections on the game and his advice to players are as applicable to the modern school of Tennis as to the earlier disciples.

The next work deserving of notice was written by R. Lukin,[2] who gives a description of a Tennis court, and of the system of scoring the sets, an illustration of the various ways in which odds may be given, and 'The rules of the game as commonly observed in the courts in London,' in a treatise which is explicit, and quite in harmony with modern practice.

But, although these books may be studied with interest by anyone who wishes to trace the steps which led to the conditions of modern play, they give no consecutive statement of the rules under which a set should be played, nor do they offer more than an outline of the laws of Tennis. With a view of supplying this want the committee of the Marylebone Cricket Club instructed a sub-committee to draft a code of rules which should be observed in their court. These laws, compiled and signed by Spenser Ponsonby, J. M. Heathcote, E. Chandos Leigh, W. Hart Dyke, and C. G. Lyttelton, were adopted in 1872 by the M.C.C., and are in force at some clubs and some private courts. In this code one departure only was made

[1] *L'Art du Paumier-raquetier, et de la Paume*, 1767 A.D.

[2] *A Treatise on Tennis*, dedicated to the Duke of Argyll, London, 1822.

from the laws handed down to us by custom or tradition in this country. Previous to 1872, if a ball dropped in the court opposite to that from which it was struck, and bounded over the net, a chase was marked at the spot where it fell. In these cases a player was required to defend a chase which he himself had made, and this occurrence, fortunately infrequent, was found to be anomalous and confusing. The M.C.C. code ordered that all such strokes should be marked 'chase the line,' and this rule now obtains in all English courts. An attempt was also made to effect a compromise between the many ways of scoring when the ball strikes the net-post; but this rule is of little interest, because in all recently constructed courts the net-post is set back in the marker's compartment so that it cannot be struck.

This set of rules, however, left some points still unprovided for except by the custom of the court, and the laws of Tennis were arranged in 1878 by Mr. Julian Marshall and published in the 'Annals of Tennis.' This code is the most recent, explicit, and complete that has been offered to the public, and alone provides for every question that could arise in an important match. By the kind permission of the author and publisher these laws are given verbatim.

## THE LAWS OF TENNIS

### Implements and Choice of Sides

1. Balls and Rackets.—The balls shall be not less than $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches, and not more than $2\frac{5}{8}$ inches, in diameter; and shall not be less than $2\frac{1}{2}$ oz., and not more than $2\frac{3}{4}$ oz., in weight.

*Note.*—There is no restriction as to the shape or size of the rackets.

2. Choice of Sides.—(*a*) The choice of sides at the beginning of the first set is determined by spin.

(*b*) In subsequent sets of a series, the players shall begin each set on the sides on which they finished the set before it.

## SERVICE

3. DELIVERY.—The ball served must be struck with the racket, and may be delivered from any part of the service-side.

4. SERVICE.—The ball served must touch the service-pent-house before touching any other part of the court, except the rest of the side-pent-house and the service-wall; and it must drop in the service-court, or on one of the lines which bound it.

5. SERVICE, WHEN GOOD.—The service is good,

(*a*) if the ball served touch (in its descent) any part of the service-pent-house, so as to rise again from it; or

(*b*) if the ball served strike the service-wall, and afterwards touch (in its descent) any part of the service-pent-house, even though it do not rise again from it; or

(*c*) if the ball served drop in the winning-gallery.

6. FAULTS NOT RETURNABLE.—A fault may not be returned.

7. PASSES NOT RETURNABLE.—A pass may not be returned; but a ball served, which has not gone across the pass-line on the pent-house, may be volleyed, although, if untouched, it might have dropped in the pass-court. If a pass touch the striker-out, or if a service (before it has dropped) touch him, when standing with both feet in the pass-court and not having attempted to strike the ball, it is still counted as a pass.

8. FAULTS ANNULLED.—A pass annuls a previous fault.

9. SERVICE AND FAULTS ANNULLED.—If the striker-out declare himself not ready for a service, and have made no attempt to return it, that service is counted for nothing, though it be a fault. It annuls a previous fault. The striker-out, having been asked if he be ready, and having declared himself ready, may not refuse a second service.

10. CONTINUATION OF SERVICE.—The server continues to serve until two chases be made, or one chase when the score of either player is at forty or advantage (see Law 25): the players then change sides, the server becomes striker-out, and the striker-out becomes server.

## RETURN

11. RETURN, WHEN GOOD.—The return is good if the ball in play be struck with the racket so that it pass the net without touching a gallery-post or anything fixed or lying in an opening

on the side from which it is struck, and without going out of court.

12. RETURN, WHEN NOT GOOD.—The return is not good,

(*a*) if not in accordance with the terms of law 11 ; or

(*b*) if the ball be struck more than once, or be not definitely struck ; or

(*c*) if the ball in-play, having passed the net, come back and drop on the side from which it was struck, unless it should have touched a gallery-post or anything fixed or lying in an opening on that side of the court which is opposed to the striker.

13. BALL, WHEN NOT RETURNABLE.—A ball which is no longer in-play may not be returned.

## SCORING

14. THE SERVER WHEN HE WINS A STROKE.—The server wins a stroke (except as provided in law 9)

(*a*) if a good service enter the winning-gallery or the grille ; or

(*b*) if the striker-out fail to return a good service (except when it makes a chase : see laws 17–19); or

(*c*) if the striker-out fail to return the ball in-play (except when it makes a chase : see laws 17–19) ; or

(*d*) if he himself return the ball in-play so that it enter the winning-gallery or grille, or fall on or beyond the service-line ; or

(*e*) if he serve or return the ball in-play so that it drop or fall upon a ball, or other object, which is on or beyond the service-line ; or

(*f*) if he win a chase (see law 20) ; or

(*g*) if the striker-out lose a stroke (see law 16).

15. THE STRIKER-OUT, WHEN HE WINS A STROKE.—The striker-out wins a stroke (except as provided in law 9)

(*a*) if the server serve two consecutive faults (except as provided in law 31 (*b*)) ; or

(*b*) if the server fail to return the ball in-play (except when it makes a chase : see laws 17–19) ; or

(*c*) if he himself return the ball in-play so that it enter the dedans ; or

(*a*) if he win a chase ; or

(*e*) if the server lose a stroke (see law 16).

16. EITHER PLAYER, WHEN HE LOSES A STROKE.—Either player loses a stroke,

(*a*) if he lose a chase (see law 21); or

(*b*) if the ball in-play (except as provided in law 7) touch him or anything which he wears or carries (except his racket in the act of returning the ball); or

(*c*) if he touch or strike the ball in-play with his racket more than once, or do not definitely strike it.

17. CHASES, HOW MARKED.—When a ball in-play (on either side of the net, not being that on which the striker is standing)

(*a*) falls on any part of the floor, except on or beyond the service-line; or

(*b*) enters any gallery except the winning-gallery; or

(*c*) touches a gallery-post;

it is marked as a chase,

(*α*) at that line on the floor on which it fell; or

(*β*) better or worse than that line on the floor which is nearest to the point at which it fell; or

(*γ*) at that gallery the post of which it touched;

except as provided in laws 18 and 19.

*Note* (*a*).—A ball in-play, which touches the net-post and drops on the side opposed to the striker is marked a chase at the line on the side on which it drops.

*Note* (*b*).—A ball in-play which enters a gallery is marked a chase at that gallery which it enters, notwithstanding that it may have touched an adjacent gallery-post without touching the floor in the interim.

*Note* (*c*).—The gallery-lines on the floor correspond and are equivalent to the galleries of which they bear the names.

18. A BALL DROPPING OR FALLING IN NET, OR BOUNDING OVER NET AFTER DROPPING, HOW MARKED.—When a ball in-play

(*a*) drops or falls in the net on the side opposed to the striker; or

(*b*) drops on the floor on the side opposed to the striker, and, bounding over the net, falls on that side of it from which it was struck, whether it touch the net in its bound or not;

it is marked a chase at the line on the side opposed to the striker.

19. A BALL DROPPING OR FALLING UPON ANOTHER BALL, HOW MARKED.—When a ball in-play drops or falls upon a ball, or other object, which is on the floor (except when it is on or beyond the service-line: see law 14 (*e*)), it is marked a chase at the point

at which that ball, or other object, was when the ball in-play dropped or fell upon it.

20. CHASES, HOW WON.—Either player wins a chase

(*a*) if he serve or return the ball so that it enter a winning opening; or

(*b*) if he serve or return the ball so that it fall better than the chase for which he played, or enter a gallery, or touch a gallery-post, better than the gallery or the gallery-line, at which the chase was for which he played; or

(*c*) if he serve or return the ball so that it drop or fall upon a ball, or other object, which is at a point on the floor better than that at which, or at the gallery corresponding to which, the chase was for which he played; or

(*d*) if his antagonist fail to return the ball in-play, except when it falls worse than the chase in question.

21. CHASES, HOW LOST.—Either player loses a chase

(*a*) if he fail to return the ball in-play, except when it falls worse than the chase in question; or

(*b*) if he return the ball in-play so that it fall worse than the chase, or enter a gallery, or touch a gallery-post worse than the gallery, or the gallery-line, at which the chase was for which he played; or

(*c*) if he return the ball in-play so that it drop or fall upon a ball, or other object, which is at a point on the floor worse than that at which the chase was for which he played.

22. CHASE-OFF.—When a ball in-play

(*a*) falls at a point on the floor neither better nor worse than that at which, or at the gallery corresponding to which, the chase was for which the striker played; or

(*b*) enters that gallery, or the gallery corresponding to that gallery-line, or touches the post of that gallery, or falls on the gallery-line corresponding to that gallery at which the chase was for which the striker played; or

(*c*) drops or falls upon a ball, or other object, which is at a point on the floor neither better nor worse than that at which, or at the gallery corresponding to which, the chase was for which the striker played;

it is marked chase-off, it is not scored as a stroke won by either player, the chase is annulled, and the striker has not to play for it again.

23. CHASES WHEN PLAYED FOR.—As soon as two chases are marked, or one chase when the score of either player is at forty or

advantage (see law 25), the players change sides; the player who made the first chase now defends it, while the other plays to win it, and so with the second chase, except when only one has been marked.

24. CHASES MARKED IN ERROR ANNULLED.—If by an error three chases have been marked, or two chases when the score of either player is at forty or advantage (see law 25), the last chase in each case is annulled.

25. STROKES, HOW SCORED.—On either player winning his first stroke the score is called fifteen for that player; on either player winning his second stroke, the score is called thirty for that player; on either player winning his third stroke, the score is called forty for that player; and the fourth stroke won by either player is scored game for that player, except as below:

If both players have won three strokes, the score is called deuce, and the next stroke won by either player is scored advantage for that player; if the same player win the following stroke he wins the game; if he lose the following stroke the score is again called deuce, and so on until either player win the two strokes immediately following the score of deuce, when the game is scored for that player.

26. GAMES, HOW SCORED.—The player who first wins six games wins a set, except as below:

If both players win five games, the score is called games-all, and the next game won by either player is scored advantage game for that player. If the same player win the following game, he wins the set; if he lose the following game, the score is again called games-all; and so on until either player win the two games immediately following the score of games-all, when he wins the set.

*Note.*—Players often agree not to play advantage sets, but to decide the set by one game after arriving at the score of games-all.

27. DOUBTFUL AND DISPUTED CASES, HOW DECIDED.—Every chase is marked and every stroke scored by the marker, who is entitled to consult the dedans when he is in doubt. A player who is dissatisfied with the marker's decision is entitled to appeal to the dedans. A majority of the dedans confirms or reverses the marker's decision. An appeal must be made before a recommencement of play.

*Note.*—The dedans should not give a decision unasked on a question of marking a chase or stroke; but may, and should, correct inaccurate scoring of chases, strokes, games, or sets.

## THREE-HANDED OR FOUR-HANDED GAMES

(Sometimes called Double Games)

28. ORDER OF PLAY.—The partners serve and strike out in alternate games, unless it shall have been previously agreed to the contrary.

*Note.*— It is usually, but not always, agreed that the striker-out may leave to his partner such services as pass him. The former laws apply to these as well as to single games, the advantages and disadvantages attaching to a single player under the former laws attaching to a pair of players.

## ODDS

29. BISQUES AND HALF-BISQUES, WHEN TAKEN GENERALLY.—(*a*) A bisque or a half-bisque may not be taken after the service has been delivered.

(*b*) The server may not take a bisque after a fault, but the striker-out may do so.

30. BISQUES AND HALF-BISQUES, WHEN TAKEN IN CHANGING SIDES.—A player who wishes to take a bisque or a half-bisque, there being a chase or two chases marked, may take it either before or after changing sides, but he may not after changing sides go back to take it.

31. ROUND SERVICES.—(*a*) When the odds of round services are given, the ball served by the giver of odds must touch the grille-pent-house after touching the service-pent-house, and before dropping in the service-court or on one of the lines which bound it.

(*b*) Neither faults nor failure in complying with the above conditions are counted against the giver of odds; but the recipient of odds may decline to return such services as do not touch both pent-houses; if, however, he attempt and fail to return any such service it is counted against him.

32. HALF-COURT.—The players having agreed into which half-court, on each side of the net, the giver of the odds shall play, the latter loses a stroke if the ball, returned by him, drop in either of the other half-courts; but a ball returned by the giver of odds which

(*a*) drops on the half-court line; or

(*b*) drops in his half-court, and touches the dedans-post before falling; or

(*c*) drops in his half-court and falls in the dedans, even though on the other side of the dedans-post ; or

(*d*) touches the dedans-post before dropping ;

is counted for the giver of odds ; and a return, boasted against any wall by the giver of odds, which

(*e*) drops in his half-court ; or

(*f*) drops on the half-court line ; or

(*g*) touches the dedans-post before dropping ; or

(*h*) touches any pent-house, battery, or wall before dropping in his half-court, dropping on the half-court line or touching the dedans-post ;

is also counted for the giver of odds.

*Note.*—It is of course evident that the giver of these odds may make a chase, or win a chase or a stroke, with a ball which drops in his half-court or on the half-court line, but falls in the other half-court.

33. NICKS, WHEN ALL-THE-WALLS OR SIDE-WALLS ARE GIVEN.—When the odds of touch-no-walls or touch-no-side-walls are given, a ball returned by the giver of odds, which makes a nick, is counted for the striker.

I will add a few comments on the principles involved in some of these laws, pointing out where they, in the opinion of some players, still fall short of absolute perfection, and showing in what particulars they differ from the rules enforced in France.

Law 4 prohibits a service which, although forbidden by the rules given in Lukin's treatise, has been subsequently practised in several Tennis courts. In Paris it is termed *le service martelé* or *piqué*. The ball is hammered or struck with considerable force on to the pent-house above the second or last gallery, whence it flies rapidly to the end-wall near the pass-line, and not unfrequently bounds into the grille. It is a mechanical stroke, easily learned, and devoid of interest; it gives an undue advantage to the server, and is very properly condemned by all lovers of Tennis.

Law 8 can only be defended by the plea that it has been the custom for many generations. The committee of management of the court at Manchester passed a by-law in 1884

enacting that in their court a pass shall not annul a previous fault, and this simple but bold measure of reform is highly to be commended.

Law 12 (*b*) very properly precludes a player from catching and, as it were, throwing the ball over the net, when by an accidental rebound it has clung so close to the end-wall that a definite stroke is impossible. As Barcellon pointed out ninety years ago, writing in condemnation of this practice, if a player may hold the ball even for a fraction of a second, he cannot logically be prevented from holding it for an indefinite period, and even from running up to the net still keeping the ball on the strings of his racket.

It is not easy to see how this sub-section could be more explicitly worded, but a stroke recently occurred at Brighton in actual play which illustrates the difficulty of providing legislation for every possible contingency. In this case the striker-out, having to play for a short 'chase,' forced very hard and with accurate aim for the 'dedans.' The ball grazed the racket of the server, and, slightly deflected from its course, struck the 'bandeau' above the 'dedans,' whence it returned over the net, without touching the floor on the service-side, and dropped on to the floor on the hazard-side. If the server can be said to have *definitely struck* the ball when he tried to stop the 'force' with a volley, the return was a *good* one, and fulfilled the conditions of law 11, but nothing save a wild flight of imagination could suggest that such a stroke was *definite* in any sense of the word. The incident, or rather accident, is probably unique in the annals of Tennis, and is mentioned here more on account of its unparalleled eccentricity than as showing the necessity for provision against its recurrence.

Law 17 (note *a*) is not a satisfactory solution of this question, but it is at least as good as the M.C.C. rule, which makes the net-post 'out of court,' or the ancient custom of treating the post as if it were a portion of the net, and considering all balls which passed over the net to be 'in-play,' although they might have touched the net, the net-post, or the

hook which fastens the net to the main-wall. The last of these is the most logical, but it is inconvenient, and it is to be hoped that the elimination of the net-post from all Tennis courts may render all legislation on the subject unnecessary.

Law 17 (note *b*) is in accord with the past and present practice of French courts, but is an innovation in this country. In Lukin's treatise on Tennis the law is thus worded: 'If a ball touch the post of a gallery, or door, or the post of the "dedans," it is to be marked as if it entered such gallery, door, or "dedans"'; and this ruling remained unchallenged in England until 1878. In favour of Mr. Marshall's alteration it can be urged that a ball may enter a gallery after touching a post so lightly that the attention of the marker may not have been called to the fact of its having done so; but I would venture to submit in defence of the English custom that a ball which has touched a post is *dead*, and therefore no longer *in-play*, and that it is in accordance with reason and logic that the stroke shall be marked at the spot where to all intents and purposes the 'rest' was actually determined.

Law 22 is opposed to the practice in foreign countries. Scaino and all subsequent writers bear testimony to the custom of playing for a 'chase' which has been established as often as may be necessary, until it is either won or lost. No important principle, however, is involved, and the method of disposing of 'chase off' which obtains on the Continent offers no advantages over the custom which has always prevailed in England.

Law 26 makes compulsory what formerly was optional. Thirty years ago the set was usually determined by the eleventh game. Advantage sets were then exceptional, and were played only with the consent of both players, but the law is in accord with the general practice of modern players, and with the traditions of Continental Tennis.

Other discrepancies exist between the English and foreign systems of scoring and marking, the result of the employment of a different language and a different unit of length, but our general laws are, with the few exceptions above mentioned, so

nearly identical with those of other nations, that a few hours' experience will suffice for the acquisition of familiarity with the idiosyncrasies of foreign practice in any court in any country.

## Long Fives

The laws of Tennis are also applicable to Long Fives, except that in this exercise no chases are marked, and that the game is played eight or eleven up instead of by the set. Every stroke, therefore, in this form of the game must be returned, except when a ball enters a gallery (the winning-gallery only excepted) or returns from the end-walls beyond the service-line on the hazard-side, or beyond the last-gallery-line on the service-side. Such strokes are called 'lets,' and neither player is credited with the gain of a point. In this country the player who first wins eleven strokes wins the game. Before commencing to play it is usual to 'spin' for the choice of sides, and to change sides after each subsequent game. The server has a distinct disadvantage; if the competitors are of equal strength the striker-out must concede four points (in a game eleven up) to his adversary, and will still have a slight advantage.

This game is known in France by the name of *Restes*, and, though not mentioned by any early writers, it is probably one of great antiquity, and we may conjecture that it was the usual exercise in the *Tripots* before the introduction of chases.

## The Unwritten Law of Tennis

Reference must also be made to the unwritten law, which can only be enforced by a spirit of courtesy, and by acquiescence in the practice of former ages.

There is an ancient custom for which little can be said, except that it is an ancient custom, that a player who has lost a love set shall pay a shilling to the marker—a cruel and wanton aggravation of the annoyance usually felt by anyone who has been so signally defeated. The refinement of this

injury is carried even a step further in France: the marker on these occasions steps from his compartment into the court opposite to that occupied by the unfortunate victim, kisses the net-rope, and saying, '*Bredouille*,[1] monsieur,' makes a bow expressive of his claim to the customary *douceur*.

No penalty is attached to the intentional service of a pass delivered with a view of removing a previous fault; there is no rule which prevents a player who has to defend a close chase from leaving balls lying on the floor so that his adversary's stroke may drop or fall on one of them and so lose the chase. The dangerous practice of forcing hard for the 'dedans' when the ball has returned from the end-wall beyond the service-line is not prohibited, but, like a premeditated 'stymie' at golf or an intentional revoke at whist, such tactics are properly condemned by that chivalrous feeling which is instrumental in maintaining the high character of Tennis.

[1] 'Terme du jeu de trictrac. Etre complètement battu.'—LITTRÉ.

## CHAPTER V

### SOME GENERAL REFLECTIONS ON TENNIS, AND HINTS TO BEGINNERS

'Ludibrio neu sis, ludere disce, puer!'

*E Musis Etonensibus*, 1847

ALMOST all men who aspire to fame in a Tennis court have played with more or less success at cricket, rackets, or lawn-tennis, probably at all these games, so I will here introduce a few pages by the Hon. Alfred Lyttelton on the relation these games bear to Tennis, and to what extent their characteristic features aid or impede the development of correct style.

### THE RELATION OF TENNIS TO OTHER GAMES

BY THE HON. A. LYTTELTON

The relation of any one particular game to other games has been but little considered, and few games present more opportunities for such consideration than Tennis. With lawn-tennis, indeed, the relation of Tennis is literally parental, though the ordinary laws of evolution here sustain a singular reversal. In the world of nature we are accustomed to observe the development of the rude into the highly finished, of the primitive into the complex, of the inferior into the superior. Here, however, the process is changed. The inferior has been the successor of the superior, and the offspring is cast in far more primitive form than the sire. Dedans and gallery, tambour and grille, have been lost in the struggle

for existence; hazard-side and chase are deemed not the fittest to survive. Advantages must be claimed, indeed, for the child not possessed by the father. A lawn, a racket, a soft ball, a net, a pot of paint, and an active member of either sex, here are all the materials needed for lawn-tennis, and every country house and most suburban villas can supply them; while for Tennis, the pastime of kings, such a panoply is needed that a royal income must be won to provide it.

Though no connection so close can be traced between Tennis and other ball games, no one can have played cricket or rackets without finding that there is much which can be imported from those fine games into a Tennis court, and much which can be taken from the Tennis court back to them. Cricket may, indeed, be played contemporaneously with any of the three games above mentioned without much difficulty, though, of course, with some loss of finish; but as a rule the other three games cannot be played contemporaneously with any satisfaction. Tennis is an exacting mistress, and if a racket player wishes to woo her with success, he must seek against his former bride, not merely judicial separation, but actual decree of divorce. Some, indeed, there have been—but these are of no common clay—who on Monday have felt the tumultuous glow inspired by rackets, and on Tuesday have been able to pass unruffled by these sensuous joys to the subtler pleasures of the ancient game. But the faculty is rare, and those only who have watched Mr. Ivo Bligh among gentlemen, and Pettitt and Peter Latham among professionals, will credit its existence. With this word of warning let us hasten to say that these games frequently touch each other, and that the aptitudes for the one, by a little thought and a good deal of practice, may be transformed into finished skill in the others.

In all ball games one common law prevails. Force is imparted most effectively, not by expenditure of bodily strength only, but by the application of it to the ball at *precisely* the right time, and in precisely the right way. Now to time a ball depends entirely on the eye, or, in other words, on a fine

observation by the player of the course taken by a ball which is hit from a particular position in a particular way, and which may have to strike against or fall on to certain objects, notably ground, floor, or walls, before there is a convenient opportunity of striking it. Now this eye or fine faculty of observation can never be taught. Practice improves it, but the strange fact remains that men of high intelligence (and not short-sighted) continue for years to witness the ordinary flight of an ordinarily struck ball, and habitually run to the place where it is not going instead of to the place where the experience of 1,000 strokes ought to prove that it must go. Months elapse before the simple phenomenon presented by a ball falling on the floor, bounding against the wall, and coming off again, is tolerably apprehended. Most ladies believe that a ball struck horizontally over a net will bound off the ground vertically as if it had been dropped straight from the skies. Another aspect of the same fact can be observed in shooting. Many statesmen and almost all lawyers shoot not in front of but straight at a bird flying across or over them. Unquestionably these errors are illustrations of what, but for the eminence of the offenders, one would call a form of stupidity. But they are almost ineradicable. A good eye, in a word, is born and is not made. As, therefore, to time a ball depends chiefly on eye, 'timing' can hardly be taught. 'I see the ball, and I hit it,' Dr. W. G. Grace said when asked how he managed to 'time' so finely. This answer recalls the reply of the boatswain to the noble owner of a yacht. 'Why is it,' said the owner, 'that you call the spar at the bottom of that sail the jib-boom?' 'My lord, whatever else could you call it?' Dr. Grace and the boatswain disappointed their questioners, but in both cases it would puzzle anyone to give a better explanation.

Far otherwise, however, is it with regard to the second rule of skilful application of force, viz. to hit the ball *in the right way*. Anyone, if he is patient and docile, can be taught position, and if he is fairly well made, and has not rowed or drilled or ridden too much, can get his legs and arms to swing freely.

But the matter which is brought home most forcibly to anyone who has played the four games under consideration is that the position of the legs is of the most vital moment in the creation of a good style. The most valuable hint I ever received at any game was from E. Johnson, formerly one of the markers at 'Lord's' Tennis court. In common with most Tennis players, at the outset of my experience in that game I had found great difficulties in acquiring a satisfactory return. Johnson had often watched the cricket at 'Lord's' and had observed forward play in that game. He had the wit to see that the position of the batsman's left leg was all important, and that according as the impact of the bat on the ball was simultaneous with the descent of the left leg on the ground so the forward stroke tended to be powerful and clean. In other words, he had seen that the secret of forward play is not to advance the left leg first and then play forward with the arms and wrists, but to make the two motions simultaneously. The reason is simple and is easily explained. Such a method adds the weight of the body to the swing of the arms and the strength of the wrist. Johnson held the opinion, and he was perfectly correct, that this method should be imported into the Tennis court, and that when the heavy Tennis ball was struck at the player, he should meet it not merely with wrist and arm, but with weight of body applied by advancing the leg as in forward play at cricket. I found this opinion to be absolutely well founded, and in a few days the adoption of the principle revolutionised my play. The return of a ball played strongly into the fore-hand court at Tennis is achieved by forward play differing only from the forward play of a cricketer by the stroke being performed by one hand instead of two, and by a racket moved horizontally instead of a bat moved vertically. So much for the fore-hand Tennis return; but the back-hand return receives even greater assistance from an observation of the forward play of a left-handed batsman. The right leg of such a batsman performs precisely the same functions in forward play as that of the left leg of the right handed batsman. Figure the left-

handed batsman now playing forward with his right hand only holding the bat. Here you have exactly the correct position of the back-hand stroke of a right-handed man at rackets. Make the line of the arm horizontal instead of vertical, and you have the exact position of the Tennis back-hand stroke. Here is an opportunity for the most happy application of the painfully acquired aptitudes of one game to the needs of another. I have found very few difficulties connected with 'return' play—none, indeed, save those resulting from infirmity of eye—which are not solved by this method, which may safely be commended to all cricketers who are also players of Tennis and rackets. The reason for setting so much store on the position of the legs is that the legs, far more than the arms, convey, concentrate, and apply the weight of the body to the ball about to be struck.

Many beginners keep their legs close together when they hit a ball at Tennis or rackets, with the result that the whole force has to be gathered from the swing of the arm and the power of the wrist. A strong and flexible man can hit a ball hard even in such a manner, but he will hit it ten times as hard if he so adjusts and disposes his legs as to bring to the aid of his arms all the weight of his body. These considerations are of importance in cricket, Tennis, rackets, and lawn-tennis, though they are less important in the last two games than in the first, and for this reason the ball used in rackets and lawn-tennis is a light one, and so is the racket; thus the wrist and arm are more competent to deal with it unaided than with the heavy implements used in cricket and Tennis. The ball games under consideration occupy a middle position between games such as billiards, where the arm and wrist and fingers do the whole work, and rowing, where, we are told, the arms should be simply ministerial—mere connecting-rods to apply the weight of the body to the oar.

At cricket and Tennis, and rackets in particular, as has been shown, the legs and body play important parts, but there are still many fine strokes in which wrist and arm are alone

concerned. I may give as instances, in cricket, 'back play,' performed almost entirely by the wrist of the lowest hand on the bat, and the light underhand 'chuck' or throw in from cover-point; in Tennis, the 'stop' of a force at full length of arm; in rackets, the picking up of a ball almost behind the player by a turn of the wrist.

Certain it is, then, that these games have close connection, for it has been shown that the principles which ought to regulate the disposition of force apply in all of them; that, e.g. forward play in cricket exhibits features which should be copied into the other games whenever it is a question in them of striking with force and firmness a ball well pitched up. But there are, in addition to this main point, many other features of affinity. The ordinary hard fore-hand stroke at rackets is literally reproduced in the straight force of Tennis; substitute bat for racket, add the left hand, and pitch the ball up a little farther, and you will find that a racket or Tennis player will soon be a proficient in the straight drive of cricket. In general, a good service at rackets will help to that end at Tennis, while a Tennis player by his service in a racket court will for a time baffle the most skilful opponent.

But while there are these fundamental affinities between these games, there are, of course, very great differences. It is not proposed to enter into the details of these differences; they are sufficiently obvious to need no minute description here, where it is hoped rather to treat of things a little below the surface. Some few observations may, however, perhaps be offered by way of assistance to those who are passing or intending to pass from one game to another, in order to obviate, or if not to obviate at least to explain, their difficulties in the process.

Take first the case of a Tennis player who wishes to amuse himself when it is too hot to play Tennis by an excursion upon the lawn. At first, no doubt, he will find that every stroke which he deems good will go about six inches out of court; but when he has overcome that preliminary difficulty he is met by one more fundamental. If a good game between good

lawn-tennis players be carefully watched, it becomes apparent that the finish of nearly every good rally will be accomplished by the strong over-hand volley or 'smash,' or else by a 'placed' ball falling just inside the side line and passing just out of the reach of the player, who is standing in the middle of the court. It is soon manifest, therefore, that though accuracy is a necessity, accuracy alone will be of no avail in first-class company unless it is accompanied by rapidity of stroke. By rapidity of stroke is meant a method which will cause the flight of the ball to be quick through the air and far-bounding when it hits the ground. Now the Tennis player will soon attain accuracy both of strength and also of placing, but unless he abandons his nature he will be unable to get rapidity of stroke as above defined. His heavily cut ball will have a curved and not very rapid flight through the air. No doubt, if it is permitted to get to the ground, the ball thus cut will come very quickly off it, but by reason of the comparatively slow flight a good player will always be able to volley it. A lawn-tennis player achieves this rapidity of stroke by playing with the full face of the racket and by not attempting to cut the ball at all. If the Tennis player is to attain such a stroke, he must abandon that which gives him eminence at Tennis, and must hit the ball in a manner which, if pursued within four walls, will reduce him to the fourth rank of performers. Probably he will be unable to do this even if he were willing to try, for the task will be almost analogous to bowling with another man's action.

In somewhat less degree these observations apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the change from Tennis to rackets. The difficulties of adapting a 'round-hand' to an underhand stroke, of modifying 'cut' into twist, of transforming the quiet curved flight of the heavy into the strong direct course of the light ball, are obvious; but they are not so insuperable as those above adverted to, for rackets and Tennis are unlike lawn-tennis, inasmuch as they permit great force to be applied to the ball, whereas one of the great difficulties of lawn tennis is that, while it imposes enormous strain on the legs and lungs of

the player, it demands from him simultaneously a softness and restraint of play such as it is most difficult to exhibit under such strenuous circumstances. My experience is that a little Tennis will improve a good racket player. It will add cut to his service, it will fortify his return from the back-hand corner, and it will tend to make him long-headed. On the other hand, if rackets are once and for all abandoned after Tennis is taken up, the training they have given will never be regretted. This training will have unloosed the joints of the shoulder and strengthened the sinews of the wrist. It will have given a good notion of the manner in which a ball will come off a wall; it will impress the necessity of a close observation, not merely of the ball itself, but of the manner in which the ball has been hit by your opponent; it will enable you to send the ball into the dedans in a manner which will defy the surest of 'stops.'

A good cricketer, if he gives time to them, will probably be able to play at any of the games in question. Such an one must have a good eye, and a good wrist, and good judgment. If he can appreciate the course which a ball will take off so changing a surface as that of the ground exposed to all weathers, he will have little difficulty in shrewdly guessing where it will go after being hit by a racket at lawn-tennis or rackets when he has only to deal with the most carefully preserved lawns and the smoothest walls and floors. If indeed he is harassed by the numberless curves which are imparted to a Tennis ball's hairy surface by the strong heavy racket, the situation will not be wholly strange to one who has dealt with a really good bowler vaunting himself on a crusty wicket. As rowing generates inaptitude for the ball games here discussed cricket gives aptitudes to all such games, while at the same time it is not so like them as injuriously to affect the style of one who passes from the wickets to the courts. Herein lies the difficulty of dealing with the other three games. They are sufficiently like each other to make it very difficult to pass from one to the other without carrying to some extent the methods of one into the practice of the other. A lawyer when

he goes into Parliament is far more at home than an untrained speaker, but if he continues to frequent the forum he will never probably strike quite the true note for the senate. The two places are like and yet unlike. Just so a lawn-tennis player will come into a Tennis court. For a time he will far surpass those who have not had his training, but if he still performs on the lawn, his stroke at Tennis will lack that sacred fire which a rival who is not a lawn-tennis player without his initial facility may ultimately attain.

It may be observed in conclusion that cricket, rackets, lawn-tennis, and even Tennis itself, when once the court is built, are well within the reach of moderate incomes, make small encroachments on a man's time, and can be enjoyed and sufficiently practised by very hard-worked men of sound constitution. As a proof of this, a very eminent member of the present Cabinet joins the best amateurs either in Tennis or lawn-tennis, and still makes strokes which will arouse their envy and despair. Some say that a fine scholar need fear no branch of learning, and that a senior classic can turn his brains to any subject. With more truth it may be affirmed that a good cricketer has an eye and hand trained to anything, and that he is half-way to being proficient in three other excellent games. The like cannot be said of some splendid exercises. Riding to hounds, the finest of all outdoor pursuits, will not help you in any other game or sport except polo. A first-rate shot has to learn every other amusement from the very beginning. Rowing, the best of bodily trainings, positively unfits a man for games, and, unless your way in the world leads you to the banks of a river, can rarely be pursued after academic life is closed.

Let all therefore learn cricket who wish to have the power in the midst of mental toil to banish every thought of work, for cricket lies at the root of most good games, and youth without good games is gloomier than age without whist.

Two important lessons may be learned by a perusal of these pages: that correct style can only be acquired by the man who, either by precept or practice, has learned to adopt the right position of body when he makes his stroke, and that force can only be properly applied to the ball by one whose hand and eye are in sympathy.

I will try with some further illustrations of these and other attributes which are indispensable to the Tennis player to assist the tiro to answer a question I have often put to myself, and which others have often put to themselves before now: 'How can I put half-fifteen on to my game?'

In order to become proficient in so difficult a game as Tennis, it is necessary that a player should be possessed not only of what is commonly called a 'good eye' and the physical advantages of some strength and activity, but also of the mental attributes of patience and perseverance, and that quality which is better expressed by the old Roman word *virtus* than by any equivalent in our language. To any man thus gifted by nature, who can begin to learn the game when first 'tondenti barba cadit,' who has opportunity for frequent practice, and who will condescend to take advice from those who are competent to give it, will surely come those essential qualifications, accurate judgment and correct style. Now when I talk of correct style I do not mean that there is but one correct style. The service, the first stroke, and the return admit of infinite variety. Barre, 'Biboche,' Edmund Tompkins, George Lambert, Pettitt, Saunders, M. Mosneron, Mr. C. G. Taylor, and Mr. Lyttelton have had little in common except a high standard of excellence, and it would be as idle to compare the methods employed by these players as to contrast Velasquez with Sir F. Leighton, Claude Lorrain with J. C. Hook, or David Cox with Vicat Cole. But I would ask the tiro to remember that much may be learned by careful observation of the strategy of any really good player, by noticing at what crisis of the game a 'bisque' should be taken, what kind of service is the most effective when chases, long or close,

must be defended, and how the opportunities for playing for the openings or making use of the boast may be resorted to.

Misconceptions have frequently arisen on the question of *eye.* So many short-sighted persons have, with the aid of glasses, succeeded in becoming good players, that even organic imperfection does not seem to be an insuperable obstacle to success; moreover, I believe that if the eyes of Pettitt or John Roberts were submitted for examination to an oculist, they would not necessarily be found to differ materially from the eyes of men who have failed conspicuously at Tennis or billiards. I believe rather that most of us are supplied by Providence with retina, pupil, and humours—the component parts of that beautiful engine, the human eye—in a perfect state, but that some persons, even in early childhood, display that magical sympathy between hand and eye which enables them to control the bat, the racket, or the cue almost by instinct. This sympathy must be felt to be understood, but it may be illustrated by the consciousness of its absence in a man who feels that he is *off his shooting.* More shots are missed by a too early or too late pressure of the trigger, or, in other words, by a want of sympathy between hand and eye, than from any other cause; so, when we remember that in order to play a Tennis ball as it should be played, it must be struck at exactly the right moment with the centre of the racket, which must meet the ball at the right angle or inclination, and that, if all these conditions are not fulfilled, the ball will be lifted, twisted, or missed altogether, we may well realise how indispensable is this sympathetic action of nerve and muscle. I made use of the word *some* strength and activity advisedly, because I do not think that he

> Whose standing muscles slope
> As slopes a wild brook o'er a little stone,

has any great advantage over a less powerful opponent, and although some agility is required in reaching far-off balls, I believe that it was truly said 'a good player can generally get to the ball, and that to a first-rate player the ball always comes.' I believe

that, fortunately for him, 'cujus ætas undecimum trepidavit claudere lustrum' (if I may be permitted to turn Horace's well-known sapphic into a hexameter), the difficulty of masking the stroke and playing the ball away from an adversary is so great that it is generally possible to anticipate the intention of an opponent, and to arrive in time to return the ball with an effort more or less great.

Perhaps the only imperfection in the game of Tennis is that it lacks the *esprit de corps* so noticeable in cricket, football, and other games in which the members of the team are mutually dependent on each other, and when the success of one is the success of all. But this very imperfection is one which imperatively demands from a player confidence in his own powers and courage in playing an uphill game. That there is but little luck in Tennis may be inferred from the fact that a 'bisque,' taken or received, will materially alter the chances of success, while the odds of 'half-fifteen,' or approximately one stroke in eight, would make the issue of a match between two equal players nearly a certainty. Nevertheless, occasional 'flukes' will occur; a ball played on to the penthouse which might have been expected to afford opportunities for a crushing stroke will sometimes bound into the dedans or cling so close to the end-wall as to be almost unreturnable; balls will now and then glance from the 'bandeau' or bound from the upper part of the 'tambour' into the winning-gallery. Accidental 'nicks' will occur, and chance, success, or whatever we like to call it, will sometimes favour one competitor, while his opponent is missing his hazards by half-inches. These reverses must be encountered with pluck and patience and that spirit which prevents a man from knowing when he is beaten. But this confidence must be restrained within reasonable limits, for nothing is a greater source of annoyance to spectators, nothing tends more to alienate their sympathy, than conceit; nothing is more prejudicial to improvement than unwillingness to receive the proper odds from a superior player. Something may also be learned by a study of theo-

retical principles, which may be observed in this as in almost every game of skill, but it is useless to rely too much on that philosophy which will 'clip an angel's wings, and conquer all mysteries by rule and line.' There is no rule and line at Tennis, but philosophy, if it cannot teach us execution, can show us how to avoid faults. At cricket we are told to play with a straight bat, in rowing to catch the beginning, but experience has always shown, and will always show, how little theory will do for us without constant practice.

The surest key, therefore, to success is practice, assiduous practice, aided by ambition and encouraged by the elation consequent on well-earned victory. So the tiro is recommended always to play to win, always to exert himself as if a kingdom were at stake, and to avoid that careless and desultory style of play which may have often been observed in former years, but which is of less frequent occurrence among modern athletes. Over and over again has a set been *snatched from the fire* by the resolute and patient player from an over-confident antagonist, who, thinking that he had the game in his hands, served carelessly or took balls that ought to have been left, and left balls that ought to have been taken. When he has once 'dropped his game' the careless player will find it hard to resume his former precision, and will discover too late that, in spite of strenuous efforts, the set, and perhaps the match, may be irretrievably lost.

But one essential requirement remains to be mentioned—an income sufficient to provide for the devotion of from 25*l.* to 30*l.* to this amusement; and here I would endeavour to remove the misconceptions that prevail touching the excessive cost of the game of Tennis. Should a wandering player enter a court in the neighbourhood where he may happen to be staying, and play for a casual hour or two with the marker, he may not find the amusement commensurate with the expense; but if he becomes an annual subscriber at one of the many courts where privileges are accorded to the regular players, or is a member of one of the clubs to which a Tennis court is attached, he will find that

the cost of play will be about 2*s.* per hour only (in some courts the charge is rather more, in some it is less), and 10*l.* a year will defray the subscription and the amount necessary for the purchase and repair of rackets. The charge for the game of rackets, including the price of balls, will amount to quite as much, and an enthusiastic pursuit of billiards will absorb more time and as much money.

Football, boating, golf, and lawn-tennis are, no doubt, cheaper amusements; but I believe that the devotees of hunting, shooting, or cricket know that their recreation costs an amount in excess of that which I have named, during the brief season in which they can pursue their avocations, while Tennis players are privileged to indulge in their pastime at any season of the year, and in any weather.

This calculation is based on the assumption that an amateur is able to devote to the game four hours in the course of a week during six months of the year. Only a favoured few can spare more time than this; but it will be found that, although accuracy of execution and judgment may be subsequently matured, five or six years of such practice will enable any amateur to attain to nearly the highest standard of play to which he may aspire.

A few practical suggestions, based on the experience of many years, may be of service to the tiro at the outset of his career, and, as he must provide himself with the necessary implements, I will first call his attention to the selection of a racket. He should choose a hoop free from knots, or any imperfection in the grain of the wood, and should reject any that appear to be top-heavy, for he must remember that the gut with which the racket will be strung will add nearly an ounce and a half to the weight of the hoop. The 'fulcrum' of a well-balanced racket will be at a point in the handle about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the screw. This can be tested with sufficient accuracy before selection is made. I never select a racket for my own use of less weight than 423, or more than 427 grammes, but perhaps I am unnecessarily *exigeant* in this matter; one

whose weight is between 420 and 430 grammes will be found to be suitable to most players. Lighter rackets have not sufficient game in them, and are liable to be broken, while those that are heavier are less manageable except by very strong men. The weight of rackets is marked, usually on the end of the handle, before they are imported into this country, and the accuracy of the figures may be relied on with confidence.

The question will be asked by the beginner, 'How am I to hold my racket?' I answer, 'In the most easy and natural

FIG. 21.—GRASP OF THE RACKET FOR A FORE-HAND STROKE

way possible, bearing in mind only that its normal position when a stroke is made should be at an angle of about 45° with the floor. The handle should be grasped as lightly as is consistent with immunity from danger of its turning in the hand when the ball is struck, the thumb and fore-finger being in contact, resting on the left side near its upper edge, the other three fingers being brought round, so that their tips shall rest on its upper side. The racket should not be held too long, i.e. grasped at a point too near the end of the handle, nor too short, i.e. too near the middle-piece, for if it is held too long inac-

curacies of judgment will be emphasized, while if it is held too short reach and severity must be sacrificed, and an unskilful player may inflict a blow on his own chest or knee should the ball make an unexpected bound. Believing that a long leverage would to some extent compensate for a want of muscular power, I taught myself to play with a long racket, but I seldom play two consecutive strokes without changing my grasp, and

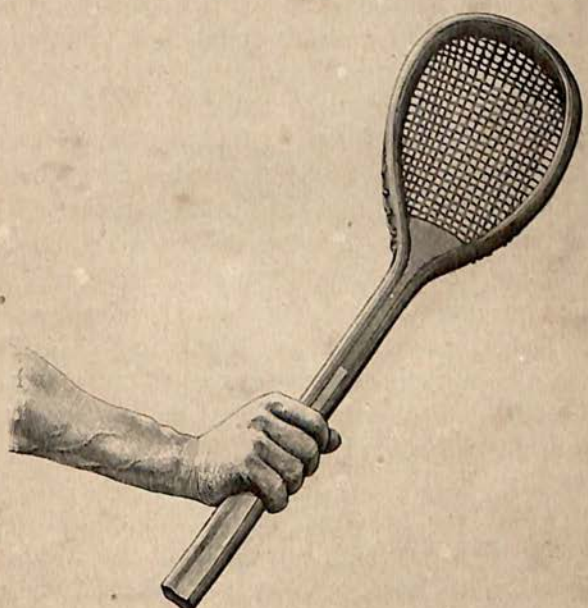


FIG. 22.—GRASP OF THE RACKET FOR A BACK-HAND STROKE

the young player will do well to accept no dogma, but to find out for himself how he can best continue severity with accuracy.

When he enters the court let him resolve never intentionally to violate the three canons of Tennis:

1. To face the side-wall, not his adversary.
2. To strike the ball in its descent.
3. To support the head of the racket, or, in other words, to keep the hoop at as high an elevation as is compatible with freedom.

Of these the first is the most important: indeed, until a player has adopted it as his second nature he can scarcely hope to play the ball with a back-hand stroke over the net. It scarcely needs demonstration that vertical spin or 'cut' will be more easily imparted to a falling than a rising ball, when it meets with the oblique face of a racket, and that although an upright racket may impart horizontal spin or twist to the ball, it will not cause the vertical spin which produces cut. He must remember that when he plays the ball fore-handed the right foot must be the pivot, the other foot being left free to be moved as occasion may require, and to be brought on to the floor immediately before the execution of the stroke, and, conversely, that the left foot must be the pivot when a back-handed stroke is necessary. That these maxims have been considered important may be illustrated by an anecdote of an enthusiast who had been taking a lesson from a French *paumier* in the morning, and who, on his way from the court, was practising ideal strokes with his umbrella in the Champs Elysées. In answer to an anxious inquiry from a friend who had not been initiated into the mysteries of Tennis, 'Que faites-vous là?' he replied, 'Mais, par exemple, j'exerce mon arrière main,' and no doubt was thought a fit and proper inmate for the 'maison des aliénés.' Nature will soon show that the knees should be slightly bent, and that the attitude should be such as will admit of rapid change of posture, but she will not suggest the conventional dogmas about bending the body that we sometimes hear, and a study of the postures of good players will show that it is just possible to 'conquer without stooping.'

For his first practice let him stand near the last-gallery on the service-side of the court and play the ball against the main-wall, as he would play a ball in a racket court, and return it fore-handed or back-handed over and over again, until he has learnt to judge its bound and to place it with some certainty. This should be soon mastered, but he will experience greater difficulty when he commences the next practice, viz. to toss the ball up on the pent-house, let it drop on to the floor, and

then play it over the net. Here the advice of a competent 'mentor' will be of inestimable value, for many beginners allow the ball to get too far in front of them, and find that they can do no more than spoon the ball with perhaps some twist, and many in their anxiety to cut the ball play with the racket too 'open,' i.e. with the hoop too horizontal, scarcely allowing themselves a chance of striking the ball fairly with the strings. These faults should be pointed out, and rectified before they become confirmed habits. It will also be found useful to toss a ball against the main-wall and to cut it with a fore-handed stroke over the net, still more useful to play a similar stroke back-handed after tossing a ball against the opposite wall; for, although this stroke cannot occur in a game, it is the easiest and simplest way of learning cut without twist. He should also practise the delivery of a service, and should observe the effect that the cut or twist he may have imparted to the ball has on its course after it touches the pent-house, walls, or floor.

For his next exercise he should take a basketful of balls to the hazard-side of the court, and tossing them one by one on to the pent-house, so that they shall fulfil the conditions of a 'round-service,' practise 'striking out,' cutting the ball, if possible, into the back-hand corner of the opposite court. He must never forget that in order to play this stroke with effect the ball must be between him and the side-wall; if therefore he has misjudged its bound from the pent-house, and he finds that it is slightly in front of him, let him play it into the fore-hand corner, and, if it should be too far in front to admit of his playing for this stroke, he should boast it against the main-wall into the back-hand corner. Lastly; he should practise 'return,' and will do well to secure the services of an intelligent marker who will play ball after ball to him with the precision of a catapult, and explain to him how and why the mistakes he most assuredly will make were caused. A few hours thus spent will help the beginner more than double the time occupied in playing with an unskilful, perhaps jealous, adversary,

whose only wish may be to get the ball over the net somehow, and whose faulty style will be more easily imitated than avoided. I do not recommend the beginner to devote much time or attention to 'Long Fives,' a game which is sometimes recommended as an excellent introduction to Tennis. It is useful, inasmuch as it developes facilities of return, but at the same time it is apt to encourage hard hitting and playing for nicks, instead of the classical style, which should be the object of attainment. I should, however, advise him to avail himself of any opportunity that may present itself of playing with an adversary who is strong enough to give him the odds of 'touch-no-walls.' Nothing is so improving to the young player as the return of balls which are coming towards him, and when these odds are given this stroke must necessarily be repeated again and again in infinite variety.

Of the errors to which young players are prone none is more common than a tendency to take the ball at the volley or the half-volley when there is no necessity for so doing. A long-hop can always be played more effectively than any other stroke, and it is generally better to step back and take the ball in its bound than to advance for the volley.

Beginners are also often too much addicted to forcing, tempted by the apparent facility of aiming accurately at so large an opening; but they should remember that direct forces are easily volleyed, and also that the penalty is a heavy one if the hazard is missed, for the ball must make a long chase or afford an opportunity of an easy stroke.

Moreover, that the difficulty of forcing straight is greater than it is supposed to be will be demonstrated by statistics, whose accuracy may be relied on, which were published in the *Field* in the summer of 1884. An analysis of strokes, which in the opinion of the reporter were forces, showed that of such strokes Pettitt delivered 68 per cent. that entered the dedans, or would have done so had they not been stopped; the present writer, 54 per cent.; Mr. A. Lyttelton, 40 per cent.; and George Lambert 37 per cent. only. The averages of the two

last-named players is lower than might have been expected, but it must be remembered that Mr. Lyttelton seldom forces except in emergencies, and then with great severity, and that Lambert's favourite attack of the dedans is by that difficult stroke, the boast. Pettitt's average is a high one, but bearing in mind that no past or present player has played with accuracy for openings as he does, the inference may be drawn that play on the floor is not only the most classical but also the soundest.

It is not desirable to play constantly with one opponent. Although a contest with a strong antagonist encourages dash and severity, these qualities are cultivated at the expense of accuracy, and frequent play with a weaker opponent gives undue importance to a never-failing, but perhaps weak, return.

I will now endeavour to point out to the young player, no longer a tiro, some of the countless variations of strategy that may be pursued by anyone who has mastered the first principles of the game. Let me suppose that he is matched with a player of about his own strength, and that he has the right to serve. He will probably have learned by experience that the 'side-wall' service is the least fatiguing and most generally useful that he can deliver, so I will assume that he elects this well-known opening for his first attack. If the service is given with sufficient cut or over-hand twist, and is also *bien ajusté*, the ball will cling so close to the end-wall that his adversary will be compelled—unless he volleys it from the pent-house—to toss it high in the air so that it may bound into the dedans.

Some presence of mind is now required in calculating if it may be allowed to drop on to the floor, or if it must be volleyed. In the former case it will be found easy to cut the ball into either corner of the court, but the latter alternative presents no opportunity for a decisive stroke. I should recommend the player, if the ball thus tossed comes to his fore-hand, to wait until it has dropped to within two feet or so from the floor, and to 'boast' it against the main-wall to the opposite galleries; if it comes to his back-hand to take it at the level of his shoulder, and to endeavour to place on or near the tambour.

If, however, the service is too short, i.e. if it does not reach the end-wall, he will lay himself open to an attack in either corner of the court; if it is too long, i.e. if it strikes the end-wall before the floor, an opportunity for a force, boasted or direct, or a stroke into the back-hand corner, is afforded; and the server in both these cases will find himself put on his defence. If, therefore, he knows that his antagonist has learned that beautiful but hazardous stroke, the volley from the pent-house, or if he should be a striker-out of more than average strength, he may think it best to attempt a more difficult opening, and assuming that he does not adopt that modern abomination the under-hand twist in season and out of season, he cannot do better than give a drop-service with some over-hand twist. Another matter worthy of consideration is what service should be delivered when chases, long or short, must be defended. For yard-chases it is, of course, of paramount importance that an opportunity for a 'force' should not be offered, and as balls coming towards a player are far less easily 'forced' than those which return from the end-wall, a ball quietly tossed on to the pent-house, so that it shall drop on the floor near the galleries, will best meet the case. For the defence of chases worse than a yard and better than three the 'giraffe' is useful; for others from three to the first gallery it is good policy to serve for a 'nick' with under-hand twist; while if still longer chases, or chases on the hazard-side, have been made, the 'drop' may prove a valuable resource.

The question is often asked, What is the best service to which a player should resort after he has served one fault? It is obvious that he must reduce to a minimum the chance of the delivery of a second fault, so the 'giraffe,' or any fancy service, should be avoided, but any one may be selected which will combine some elements of difficulty with the certainty of its fulfilling the conditions of a good service. I have found it good policy to try for a 'nick,' endeavouring rather to find the length of the court than to attain my object with the aid of twist.

I would caution the young player against too great eagerness whilst on the service-side to return every ball. He should

remember that if he changes sides to play for chase six, he has an advantage over his opponent, and that it is better to allow a long chase to be established than to attempt to return the ball without a fair prospect of deciding the 'rest.' The striker-out on the other hand must return all strokes except those that would make hazard-side chases, and the exigencies of the moment must determine if attack is possible, or what is the most aggressive form of defence open to him.

There is yet one question to which I would call the young player's attention: 'Where shall he place himself when his adversary has a *balle à la main*?' The grille, the last-gallery, the tambour, and both corners of the court are all open to attack; which shall he try to defend?

Edmund Tompkins usually placed himself near the tambour, in a position which would enable him to volley any ball played to that part of the court: little, however, can be done with such a volley, and the rest of the court is deplorably open. George Lambert and Saunders adopt similar tactics, and both these players frequently make a successful counter-attack, boasting the volley into the back-hand corner. I prefer to stand in the middle of the court, taking my chance of my adversary's stroke being played upon the tambour, whence a beautiful return may often be made, prepared also to defend the fore-hand corner. I have observed that Pettitt occupies such a position, if so ubiquitous a player can be said ever to occupy any position in particular; and that Mr. A. Lyttelton and most of our eminent amateurs adopt a similar system of defence.

## CHAPTER VI

### RECORDS OF MATCHES AND MEMOIRS OF EMINENT PLAYERS

αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν καὶ ὑπείροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλων.
Homer, *Il.* vi. 208

WITH but few exceptions, all matches for the premiership of professional Tennis have been international contests, so it will be interesting to trace the alternate successes of the French and English champions who have taken part in these competitions. I will, therefore, merely mention Barcellon, Cabasse, and Masson as the most eminent of French *paumiers*, Mucklow and Pillet as the most distinguished English players towards the end of the last century, but of whose relative strength we are ignorant, and will call the attention of the reader to the first important match chronicled in the 'Sporting Magazine.' In this journal we read[1] 'That a purse of 100 guineas was played for in May 1816, by Mr. Cox, master of the Tennis court in London, and Mr. Marchesio, son of Mr. Marchesio, master of the Tennis court to the Court of Turin, and won by the latter after three days' playing.' From this we may infer that Philip Cox, or 'old Cox,' as he was called, who was born in 1779, was inferior to the best foreign player; but we are told[2] that on June 25, 1819, a match between Mr. Cox and M. Amédée Charrier, of Paris, who was then the champion in his own country, was decided in favour of Mr. Cox after a severe contest. About 1829, old Philip Cox played a match with, and was decisively beaten by, the greatest of all great players,

[1] Vol. xlviii. p. 147. [2] *Ib.* vol. liv. p. 197.

J. Edmond Barre, who from that time maintained unquestioned supremacy over all rivals until 1862. Indeed rivals he had none, for in 1839 he was able to give 'half-thirty' and a 'bisque' to Edmund Tompkins (better known as 'Peter'), who was at that time the strongest English player. In 1846 he could give at least 15 to 'Peter's' eldest son Edmund, who in that year asserted his position as champion of England, defeating W. J. Cox (the second son of old Cox, born in 1806) after a long and well-contested match.

By this time another French luminary had risen above the horizon, Charles Delahaye, or 'Biboche' (for by that name he was usually called in the Tennis court), who was born in 1825, and at an early age attained a position in his own country second only to that of Barre. He came to England in 1851, and succeeded in beating Edmund Tompkins at Oxford, and also in London. In 1860 Tompkins, anxious to retrieve his laurels, went to Paris, where a match was arranged with 'Biboche' in the court in the Passage Sandrié. In this match every set, every game, every stroke was closely contested, but 'Biboche's' resource, his indomitable energy, and the formidable 'drop' service which he gave with telling effect in this match, enabled him again to secure victory. By this time Edmund Tompkins could well hold his own with Barre at half-fifteen, and in the year 1862 ('Biboche' being in failing health) it was arranged that a match, the best of fifteen sets, should be played in the court in James Street, Haymarket, which should decide the world's Tennis championship.

On the first day of this match (May 16) two sets only were played, the first of which was abandoned as drawn by mutual consent of the competitors, the score having been called 'games all' over and over again, and both players being well-nigh exhausted; Barre succeeded in winning the second set. On the second day (May 20), Barre won two sets, Edmund one; on the third day (May 23), Edmund added two sets to his score, Barre one only. On the fourth (May 28) another set was drawn, two were won by Edmund; and on June 10, the fifth day

of this severe and protracted match, two more sets were drawn, and Edmund brought one to a successful issue in his favour. At this stage of the match the veteran appealed for leave to withdraw: Tompkins and his backers generously forbore to press the claim they might surely have substantiated, and the match and bets were declared drawn. Barre, however, never again asserted a claim to the Championship of Tennis, and from that time until 1870, or thereabouts, Edmund Tompkins's supremacy over all opponents was unquestioned. In 1869 he gave short odds to George Lambert, who by that time had passed all other contemporary professionals, and also to myself, but about this time he sprained his ankle severely, and several years elapsed before he again took part in single-handed contests.

This accident precluded Tompkins from playing Tennis in 1870, and in 1871 he declined Lambert's offer to play a match with him in the course of the ensuing autumn, on the ground that, although his ankle was nearly as strong as ever, the practice he could command at Oxford, where he managed the Merton court, was inadequate preparation for an important match. George Lambert thus became entitled to claim the championship, and the rapid progress he made in that and in the following year placed his position in the Tennis world beyond all possible dispute. When they subsequently met in the court at Lord's, Lambert could give his former rival 15 for a 'bisque.' His reign, therefore, may be said to have commenced in 1871, and his supremacy was undisturbed for a period of fourteen years.

Thomas Pettitt, who on his arrival in this country in 1883 fairly astonished all spectators by the facility with which he had become proficient in every feature of the game, challenged any man in the world to play for the championship, in any neutral court in England. This challenge, which appeared in the columns of the *Field* in 1884, led to no immediate result, but in December of that year he offered to play a home-and-home match—Lord's and Boston—or a match in a neutral

court. Lambert accepted the latter alternative, and, Hampton Court and Manchester having been suggested as fulfilling conditions of neutrality, the choice of these was decided by the loss of a coin in favour of the home player, who elected Hampton Court. Lambert, like the true sportsman he has always shown himself, was eager for the fray, and this eagerness led him to agree to conditions which might have daunted many a younger but less sanguine man. These conditions were:—The match to be the best of thirteen sets; four sets to be played on three alternate days in one week, and, in the event of the score standing at six games all, the deciding set to be played on the Monday in the following week.

This memorable match was commenced on Monday, May 11, 1885. On this day Lambert won the first set, 6 games to 2, 28 strokes to 17; Pettitt the second, 6 games to 1, 30 strokes to 17. Up to this time the light had been treacherous, neither competitor quite at his ease, and the standard of play not very high; but in the third and fourth sets both combatants had attained to more accuracy of length in the twisted underhand service, which they gave with monotonous persistence throughout the match, and, though the play on the floor was far, very far, below the form that might have been shown by Lambert in his prime, so brilliant a display of forcing and stopping has seldom, if ever, been seen in any Tennis court at any time. These sets both fell to Lambert, the first at 6 games to 1, 29 strokes to 15; the second, 6 games to 5, each player having won 41 strokes. On Wednesday, the 13th, the play was even more sensational in character than it had been on Monday, for Pettitt had learned to volley with some success the terrific 'boasted force' which had been Lambert's strongest weapon of offence. But still the English champion maintained his lead, and won the fifth set, 6 games to 4, 33 strokes to 28, and the sixth, also 6 games to 4, 34 strokes to 29. At this stage of the match Lambert had won 5 sets to Pettitt's 1, and anyone who did not know how severe a strain on the strength of a man in his forty-fourth year would be caused by so

protracted a struggle might have been disposed to lay long odds on the English champion ; but, although his courage and determination enabled him to keep the issue of the match long in suspense, a close observer could not fail to see that his stroke was becoming less severe and that his natural force had abated, while his adversary was improving every hour. Pettitt won the seventh set, 6 games to 4, 28 strokes to 27, and the eighth, 6 games to 3, 31 strokes to 23. On the third day's play, Friday, May 15, the match, which now stood at Lambert 5 sets, Pettitt 3 sets, was resumed, but it was obvious that Lambert's strength had been overtaxed, for Pettitt assumed and maintained a lead in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh sets, winning the first of these at 6 games to 2, 31 strokes to 24 ; the second, 6 games to 3, 44 strokes to 35 ; and the third, 6 games to 3, 34 strokes to 27. The excitement caused by the twelfth set must be felt to be understood, for on that the issue of the match depended, and George Lambert, knowing that, if successful, two days must elapse before he would be called on to play again, strained every nerve to win. In vain ! This set also fell to Pettitt after a never-to-be-forgotten struggle, 6 games to 5, 37 strokes to 34, and with it the match, 7 sets to 5, 58 games to 51, 361 strokes to 352. Thus Pettitt became entitled to claim the position of champion Tennis player, but it is improbable that he will remain long in peaceful possession of that coveted honour, for Charles Saunders, who assumed the championship of England after defeating George Lambert in 1886, has in the last two years improved in every point of the game, and is eager to try conclusions with his transatlantic rival.

That a match between two such brilliant players, both of whom are in the prime of life and nearly of the same age, should be arranged is the dream of all lovers of Tennis, and it is much to be deplored that no international code exists which should provide for the acceptance of a challenge or forfeiture of the distinguished honour of championship. An attempt was made in 1886 by a committee formed of representatives of the

principal English clubs to grapple with this difficulty, and diplomatic overtures were made to the courts in France and America. But it was found impossible to frame rules which would secure the approval of London, Paris, Boston, and Melbourne, so I can only express a hope that mutual concessions and a spirit of fair play may, when occasion arrives, pave the way to a friendly battle for the honoured title of Tennis Champion of the World.

Second only to the interest which is attached to these records will be some notice of the careers of gentlemen who have from time to time worn the blue riband of amateur Tennis, the more so because, in the course of the last hundred years, the supremacy was held for a considerable time by a representative of the court at Paris. Mr. Marshall, deriving his information from a French writer, M. Man. . . .eux, tells us 'that about 1780 M. Reverdy, of Châlons-sur-Saône, who was the best of French amateurs, was the equal perhaps of Mr. Price, but certainly not so strong as Mr. Hawkins, both of whom were English gentlemen players.'[1] In the early years of this century Baron Nanteuil de Lanorville, undoubtedly a fine player, and M. Boichard were the strongest of French amateurs; but the achievements of amateurs in this country are unchronicled until 1820. About that time a club, of which Mr. R. Lukin was secretary, was instituted in London, whose head-quarters were established at the court in James Street, Hay-market, and an annual competition for a silver racket was inaugurated.

Mr. Scott, who had been the best player at Cambridge in 1819, was one of the first holders of this trophy, and he was probably succeeded by Mr. Cobbett Derby, who recently died at an advanced age. Lord Arthur Hervey, now Bishop of Bath and Wells, was the holder of the racket probably in the years 1829, 1830, and 1831, and he, having won it three years in succession, retained possession of it. Another trophy was then given by the club, and was won in 1832, 1833, and 1834

[1] *Annals of Tennis*, p. 112.

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by the Hon. Sir Charles Murray, who still lives, and takes a keen interest in Tennis. He appears to have been succeeded by Mr. H. Denison, who graduated at Oxford in 1831, but whose promising career was cut short by ill-health ; and it was subsequently held by Mr. Edward Bligh (who continued to play Tennis until 1857 or thereabouts), but in what year he defeated Mr. Denison, and for how many years he retained his position, are not recorded. However, a solution of this latter problem may be solved by an anecdote told me by Mr. Bligh relating to a match for position between Mr. C. G. Taylor and himself at a time when he (Mr. Bligh) was considered rather the stronger player of the two. Mr. Taylor was engaged in a cricket match at Lord's on the day fixed for this match; but, having secured a substitute in the field, and obtained leave of absence for a few hours, came in a cab from St. John's Wood to the Haymarket. This was not the best possible preparation for an important match, and it may be readily supposed that he would be unable to do himself justice. Mr. Bligh on this occasion had it all his own way, and apparently had secured an easy victory. Indeed, in what should have been the decisive rest of the match, Mr. Taylor made a stroke which would unmistakably have lost the chase for which he was playing; but, with a carelessness unpardonable in so experienced a player, Mr. Bligh attempted to return the ball, and failed! After this fortune ceased to smile on him, and he ultimately lost the match. It is probable that this was the match for the Haymarket Club racket, and that it was played in 1842 or 1843.

During the next fifteen years Mr. Taylor's superiority over all amateurs was unquestioned, but the club having been dissolved, the insignia of supremacy ceased to exist, and the date when they would have passed to the keeping of myself cannot be definitely fixed. It is certain that in 1859, by which time I had begun to give odds to all other amateurs in this country, Mr. Taylor, who was then more than forty years of age, and who seldom played in single-handed matches, in

answer to an appeal made by several lovers of Tennis, declined to put to the test what he knew must be a foregone conclusion in course of time, and I well remember him saying to me, 'You must go to Paris and beat M. Mosneron, for I never could and never shall.' This appears to be sufficient proof that M. Mosneron had been *de jure*, if not *de facto*, amateur champion from the time when he succeeded Baron Nanteuil de Lanorville. Nor was he ever defeated; for when I went to Paris for the first time in 1860 he could give me short odds in his own court, and when I went again in 1867 'anno domini' had impaired his powers, and he no longer played in single-handed matches.

About this time (1860) Mr. W. Ford, a brother of the renowned archer, was the strongest of my opponents, and when he left off playing he was succeeded by Mr. F. Eden, to whom I gave 15; but no match for first or second place was thought of until 1867. In that year the M.C.C. gave two prizes, and instituted an annual contest which virtually, if not actually, decided the amateur championship in each year; for, with the exception of Mr. Slack, of Manchester, Sir E. Grey (who is now a member), and Mr. E. B. C. Curtis, who may all be classed with the holders of the second prize, there has not been an eminent amateur who was not a member of that well-known club.

The following is a list of the winners:—

| | Gold | Silver |
|---|---|---|
| 1867. | Mr. J. M. Heathcote | Mr. Julian Marshall |
| 1868. | Ditto | Mr. G. B. Crawley |
| 1869. | Ditto | Hon. C. G. Lyttelton |
| 1870. | Ditto | Ditto |
| 1871. | Ditto | Ditto |
| 1872. | Ditto | Ditto |
| 1873. | Ditto | Ditto |
| 1874. | Ditto | Mr. G. B. Crawley |
| 1875. | Ditto | Ditto |
| 1876. | Ditto | Mr. R. D. Walker |
| 1877. | Ditto | Ditto |

| | Gold | Silver |
|---|---|---|
| 1878. | Mr. J. M. Heathcote | Mr. C. E. Boyle |
| 1879. | Ditto | Ditto |
| 1880. | Ditto | Hon. A. Lyttelton |
| 1881. | Ditto | Ditto |
| 1882. | Hon. A. Lyttelton | Mr. J. M. Heathcote |
| 1883. | Mr. J. M. Heathcote | Hon. A. Lyttelton |
| 1884. | Hon. A. Lyttelton | Mr. J. M. Heathcote |
| 1885. | Ditto | Ditto |
| 1886. | Mr. J. M. Heathcote | Mr. B. N. Akroyd |
| 1887. | Hon. A. Lyttelton | Mr. J. M. Heathcote |
| 1888. | Ditto | Mr. A. J. Webbe |
| 1889. | Ditto | Sir E. Grey |

The matches played at the beginning of this decade illustrate the penumbra, occultation, and eclipse of myself by a star of the first magnitude, who may, we hope, long illumine the atmosphere of our Tennis courts. In 1880 Mr. A. Lyttelton gave a forecast of his future successes by defeating Mr. Courtenay Boyle, the then holder of the silver prize, after a close and interesting struggle, but in that year he was overmatched when he was opposed to me in the final contest. In the course of the following year Mr. Lyttelton's game improved by leaps and bounds, and the competition of 1881 was anticipated with eager interest. This interest was enhanced by the fact that the battle was fought in the hottest hours of the hottest day ever known in England (the thermometer registering 97° in the shade), and resolved itself as much into a trial of endurance between two competitors, one of whom was in his forty-eighth year, the other in his twenty-fifth, as an exposition of skill; a physiological experiment possibly interesting, but far from agreeable to those subjected to it. The struggle was a severe one, the four sets of the match lasting 32, 35, 46, and 47 minutes respectively; but I was fortunate enough to win the first set, 6 games to 3, the second, 6 games to 3, and the fourth, also 6 games to 3, Mr. Lyttelton winning the third, 6 games to 2. In the following years, 1882, 1883, and 1884, the interest was, if possible, greater, for Mr.

Lyttelton was slowly but surely climbing the ladder whose highest rung was to be the scene of more than one well-contested match. The contest of 1882 was a memorable one, for, so equal was the play, that although Mr. Lyttelton won 3 sets to 1, thus securing the match, 20 of the 41 games played were scored to myself, and of the 268 strokes decided 131 were won by the winner, and 137 by the loser of the match. These figures are somewhat remarkable, but may be accounted for by the fact that the physical strength and endurance of the younger player enabled him generally to win the most evenly contested, and therefore the most protracted, games. In 1883, having quite recovered the use of my arm, which had been partially disabled by 'tennis elbow,' an ailment now so common that it needs no description, and Mr. Lyttelton's opportunities for practice having been curtailed by the increase of professional work, I was able to turn the tables on my youthful opponent, and to win the match in that year, 6 games to 3, 6 games to 0, and 6 games to 5; but, as was truly said in the *Field*, the last few strokes in the deciding set were critical in the highest degree, for I had drawn largely on my reserve of strength, and had I lost these strokes, the issue of the match might have been different.

In 1884 Mr. Lyttelton again established his supremacy, winning a match in which, however, the result was long in suspense. The scoring of the game was as follows: 6 games to 3, 6 games to 5, 5 games to 6, 6 games to 5. Succeeding years necessarily widened the gap which by this time may be said to have divided us, and, although Mr. Lyttelton took no part in any public match in 1886, and I was constrained to appear as champion in that year, it was known to others, as to myself, that I was only a *locum tenens*, and that Mr. Lyttelton was then, as he is now, the strongest amateur player in this or any other country.

From these records we may gather that for some years previous to 1819 the standard of professional play in Paris was higher than our own, but that from 1819 to 1829 Cox was

Tennis champion, although it is probable that Barre could have wrested from him that honour a few years earlier than he did; that Barre then held it until 1862, when it passed to Edmund Tompkins; that George Lambert was entitled to claim it in 1871 and to have held it until 1885, when it passed to Thomas Pettitt; and we may also infer that, with the exception of Mr. Hawkins (above mentioned), the French amateurs were at least equal, if not superior, to our own, until some year shortly subsequent to 1860, since which time no amateur either from America, the Continent, or our colonies could have competed on equal terms with our best gentleman player.

Almost every sapling that has grown into a forest tree in the microcosm of Tennis has been planted and watered in the nurseries of Oxford or Cambridge; it will be, therefore, interesting to give a brief notice of University Tennis. Its earliest records are mentioned by Mr. Marshall, who tells us that four persons who 'kepe tenys-playes at Oxford' (probably without a licence to do so) were each fined 6*d.* in 1508,[1] and gives us[2] the following extract from the diary and correspondence of Dr. John Worthington, who writes, April 3, 1567: 'I had a dangerous blow on the eye in the tennis court (Cambridge), but I thank God it is well again.' A little later there were several courts at each University, and play, though of a different character from what we now see, flourished, as far as we know, without interruption. At the present time there is an excellent court in Merton Street, Oxford, and two at Cambridge; one of these is in East Road, near Parker's Piece, built in 1853, now kept by George Lambert; the other was erected in 1866 in Burrell's Walk at the 'Backs of the Colleges'; James Harradine, a good player and an excellent 'coach,' has been marker in this court for some years.

In 1850, T. Sabin, who then kept the Oxford Tennis court, instituted a prize which has been competed for annually since that time.

[1] *Annals*, p. 63. [2] *Ib.* p. 82.

The following is a list of the winners :—

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1850. | C. B. Marsham | 1870. | C. J. Ottaway |
| 1851. | T. Fremantle | 1871. | R. J. Graham |
| 1852. | E. Balfour | 1872. | R. O. Milne |
| 1853. | G. Lushington | 1873. | T. S. Pearson |
| 1854. | T. Lavie | 1874. | E. Hanbury |
| 1855. | W. M. Lysley | 1875. | E. C. Lacaita |
| 1856. | B. M. Randolph | 1876. | J. Oswald |
| 1857. | R. C. Glanville | 1877. | R. R. Farrer |
| 1858. | J. H. Warner | 1878. | O. R. Dunell |
| 1859. | F. Ponsonby | 1879. | H. R. Webbe |
| 1860. | J. A. Pepys | 1880. | H. P. Harris |
| 1861. | A. Waller | 1881. | C. Leslie |
| 1862. | B. M. Davies | 1882. | E. B. C. Curtis |
| 1863. | O. Mordaunt | 1883. | Sir E. Grey |
| 1864. | G. A. Dodd | 1884. | H. Emmons |
| 1865. | E. C. Follett | 1885. | Lord R. Cecil |
| 1866. | G. E. Boyle | 1886. | W. M. Cazalet |
| 1867. | C. C. Cotes | 1887. | G. W. Ricketts |
| 1868. | W. H. James | 1888. | H. Philipson |
| 1869. | C. J. Clay | 1889. | H. W. Forster |

At Cambridge we have no authentic record of supremacy previous to 1859, when an annual inter-University competition was inaugurated, and has been held, with but one exception, in every subsequent year, with the following results :—

1859. F. Ponsonby, Oxford, beat G. Barclay, Cambridge, 3 sets to 0
1860. F. Ponsonby, Oxford, beat C. Weguelin, Cambridge, 3—2
1861. F. Langham, Cambridge, beat J. A. Pepys, Oxford, 3—1
1862. F. Langham, Cambridge, beat B. M. Davis, Oxford, 3—0
1863. Hon. C. G. Lyttelton, Cambridge, beat O. Mordaunt, Oxford, 3—1
1864. No match.
1865. R. Stephenson, Cambridge, beat E. C. Follett, Oxford, 3—2
1866. C. E. Boyle, Oxford, beat R. Stephenson, Cambridge, 3—0
1867. C. E. Boyle, Oxford, beat R. Stephenson, Cambridge, 3—1
1868. A. F. Kinnaird, Cambridge, beat W. H. James, Oxford, 3—0
1869. A. F. Kinnaird, Cambridge, beat C. J. Clay, Oxford, 3—0
1870. W. C. Marshall, Cambridge, beat C. J. Ottaway, Oxford, 3—2
1871. W. C. Marshall, Cambridge, beat C. J. Ottaway, Oxford, 3—2

1872. W. C. Marshall, Cambridge, beat C. J. Ottaway, Oxford, 3—0
1873. T. S. Pearson, Oxford, beat A. T. Myers, Cambridge, 3—1
1874. F. Thornhill, Cambridge, beat T. S. Pearson, Oxford, 3—0
1875. R. O. Milne, Oxford, beat J. B. Lingard, Cambridge, 3—0
1876. P. Crutchley, Cambridge, beat J. Oswald, Oxford, 3—0
1877. C. G. Hamilton, Cambridge, beat J. Oswald, Oxford, 3—0
1878. C. G. Hamilton, Cambridge, beat O. R. Dunell, Oxford, 3—0
1879. Hon. A. Lyttelton, Cambridge, beat R. R. Farrer, Oxford, 3—1
1880. Hon. Ivo Bligh, Cambridge, beat H. P. Harris, Oxford, 3—0
1881. I. D. Cobbold, Cambridge, beat I. H. P. Chitty, Oxford, 3—0
1882. I. D. Cobbold, Cambridge, beat E. B. C. Curtis, Oxford, 3—1
1883. Sir E. Grey, Oxford, beat I. D. Cobbold, Cambridge, 3—0
1884. J. Danes Longworth, Cambridge, beat Sir E. Grey, Oxford, 3—1
1885. H. Emmons, Oxford, beat H. Eaton, Cambridge, 3—1
1886. H. E. Crawley, Cambridge, beat W. Cazalet, Oxford, 3—1
1887. H. Emmons, Oxford, beat H. E. Crawley, Cambridge, 3—2
1888. E. Crawley, Cambridge, beat H. R. Philipson, Oxford, 3—0
1889. W. Cazalet, Oxford, beat E. Crawley, Cambridge, 3—2.

Some of these gentlemen continued to play after leaving college, and may be mentioned as amateurs who *proximé accesserunt* to the highest honours: notably, Hon. C. G. Lyttelton, now Viscount Cobham, who held the M.C.C. second prize five consecutive years; Mr. Courtenay Boyle, Mr. W. C. Marshall, Mr. Gerald Balfour, Mr. J. Oswald, Hon. Ivo Bligh, who showed promise of future excellence, which, should his health be restored to him, may yet be within his reach; Mr. Emmons, an American, who was the most remarkable exponent of left-handed play and of an absolutely unique railroad service; Sir E. Grey, who has already usurped a position second only to Mr. Alfred Lyttelton; Mr. Curtis, Mr. Cazalet, Mr. H. E. Crawley, and his brother Eustace, all of whom may have a brilliant career before them.

A record of modern University Tennis would not be complete without some reference to a few players who were eminent before these competitions were instituted. Of these I will mention the late Rev. E. W. Blore, strong as an undergraduate

of his time, and stronger still when resident Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge; Mr. Godfrey Lushington, the best of his year, 1853, who still dearly loves a game at Tennis; the late Mr. G. B. Crawley, Mr. Julian Marshall, Mr. L. Ewbank, and also Sir W. Hart Dyke, Mr. R. D. Walker, and Mr. A. J. Webbe, who might have aspired to even higher honours than have fallen to their lot had not the counter-attractions of cricket and rackets prevented them from giving exclusive attention to Tennis.

I will now endeavour to illustrate with a few personal reminiscences some of the characteristics of professional and amateur players who have lived within my own recollection, and have attained distinction in the Tennis courts at home and abroad.

Few opportunities of seeing any Tennis presented themselves to me before 1856, by which time Barre had unquestionably lost a considerable part of his game; but I have no hesitation in saying that he was the finest *all-round* player the world ever produced, or is likely to produce. His service and stroke were so much more varied in character, his return and his volley were so much more sure than those of G. Lambert, who alone can be said to have been his rival, he

'Bore the palm alone'

for so unprecedentedly long a period, that it is impossible to overrate the reputation he deservedly enjoys.

We are told that he was born at Grenoble in 1802, but when we glance at the record of his performances, and observe that he was able to play on even terms in 1862 with the strongest of English players, Edmund Tompkins, and that in 1869 he was still capable of engaging single-handed in an exhibition match with so good a player as John Tompkins, a doubt may arise in our minds that the Registrar of Grenoble may have made a clerical error, or that its archives may have been tampered with. Still the evidence is confirmed by the facts told us by M. E. Fournier, that in 1820 he was as strong

as the best amateurs, and that in 1827 he could hold his own on even terms, playing single-handed against Marchesio and Amédée Charrier, the two finest players of the time.

The game of Tennis has without doubt undergone considerable changes since that time; the tightly strung rackets and hard balls now used have made agility a more important element in the game than it was formerly; but, be this as it may, Barre unquestionably retained his eyesight and his strength but slightly impaired by advancing years. Few Tennis players now living can recollect Barre in his prime, few realise that he was an athlete of more than ordinary calibre, but a feat that he performed at Fontainebleau in 1827 demonstrates that his physical powers must have been phenomenal. Towards the close of the previous year he had played with and defeated the Comte de Reignac, to whom he gave the odds of 'touch-no-walls.' The Count, who challenged Barre to a return match to be played after an interval of a few months, received this bold reply: 'Comte, je viendrai au mois de Mai prochain, et je vous ferai la même partie, et je m'engage à faire le chemin à pied de Paris à Fontainebleau.' This task he accomplished on May 5, 1827, starting at daybreak, and traversing the distance, nearly forty English miles, in less than ten hours, winning his match that same afternoon, and walking back to Paris on the following day. His career was one of uninterrupted success; he constantly played exhibition matches both in Paris and in London, always giving odds to his opponents. He paid annual visits to England in the summer, and enlivened the dedans of the Haymarket court with his cheery laugh, his good-humour and never-failing courtesy, and astonished all spectators by the unapproachable brilliancy of his play.

Again Barre was the best giver of odds ever seen; his knowledge of the game, his accuracy, and his judgment enabled him to give half-thirty to that brilliant amateur C. G. Taylor, and I have seen him giving the odds of 'touch-no-walls' to amateurs of some strength and experience, humorously observing, however, 'Touch no walls, touch no money!' The

very name of Barre brings back to me many pleasing reminiscences; his genial courtesy, his good-humoured *chaff*, conveyed sometimes in French, sometimes in English, the absence of any highly-tinted idealisation of his own form, his unwillingness to take any undue advantage of an inexperienced player, and the alacrity with which he would give advice to a tiro: all these qualities endeared him to those with whom he came in contact.

I can now call to recollection with, I hope, pardonable pride how, thirty years ago, when I was outstripping my competitors, he said to me: 'M. Escot' (he never could get nearer than this to the pronunciation of my name), 'you play too well for gentleman.' I remember a few years later, when the lapse of six decades had brought him down to my level, after an unusually protracted rest, which had tried the endurance of his sexagenarian limbs, his leaning over the 'dedans' in the Haymarket court, resting his bald head on his folded arms, and plaintively murmuring, 'Mon Dieu! mon Dieu!' adding with a cheerful smile, 'Il est si jeune!' I remember the quaint but good-humoured satire of his remark to an ambitious but unskilful player who, in his anxiety to make brilliant strokes, put ball after ball a foot or so too low, 'But, surely, you have forgotten that there is a net in the middle!' I remember, moreover, the generous way in which he always spoke of George Lambert, whose strength and skill he never attempted to underrate or disparage, and his almost inaudible comment on a remark made by a spectator of a match in which Lambert was surpassing even himself—a remark which challenged the superiority of the old man—was characteristic: 'Il a raison; je ne puis rien prouver maintenant.' There was much pathos in the soliloquy, but not a particle of jealousy. Barre's visits to England were continued all through the seventh decade of his life, and two of the most interesting four-handed matches ever played at Lord's were those of 1868 and 1870, when he and George Lambert encountered Edmund and John Tompkins; and he played even so late as 1871, when, with his health broken by the hardships endured during

the siege of Paris and the pension granted in 1855 lost by the fall of the Empire, he paid his last visit to England, and was presented with a purse of about 400*l.* subscribed by his former friends and admirers. He died in Paris on January 20, 1873, in the seventy-first year of his age.

Charles Delahaye, to some of whose matches reference has been made, is, as we have said, better known in the Tennis world by his *sobriquet* of 'Biboche,' which was given him by the amateurs of Paris while he was marker at the court in the Passage Sandrié on account of his 'caractère vif et enjoué.' His powers were developed early; when only twenty-three years of age he could beat 'Peter' Tompkins, then the best of English players, and, although he never could have had a chance of competing with Barre on even terms, he could hold his own with him at half-fifteen before the old man's game was seriously impaired, viz. in 1855. He played with remarkable *verve* and animation, he made more use of the main-wall than most players, and his boast into the corners of the court was a strong feature of his game. He was the best exponent of forward play in a *parti carré* that I have ever seen, and his familiarity with the tactics of this form of the game and his decision of character qualified him to take the lead. He gave frequent expositions of his skill after broken health had compelled him to decline to take part in single-handed matches. I may mention one which, though not reported, lives in my recollection, invested as it was with the interest attached to an international contest. In 1867 Barre, 'Biboche,' and M. Mosneron having ceased to take part in single matches, it was arranged that I should encounter 'Biboche' and his marker Seraphin, who played then a pretty and accurate but not very strong game, in the court on the Terrasse des Feuillants. On this occasion 'Biboche' partook of the general excitement that prevailed, and the encouraging 'à vous' which rang from his lips as occasion required was more imperious than usual, and bewildered rather than aided his partner, to whose nervousness I attribute the successful issue of the match in

my favour after one of the most severe contests in my recollection.

'Biboche' still gives lessons and manages the courts in Paris with the courtesy which always characterised him.

Edmund Tompkins, though he never succeeded in beating 'Biboche' in an important match, may fairly be classed as a player in the same rank with him. No past or present player has shown style so accurate and classical. As long as he retained his activity he would intuitively place himself in the right position, hold his racket in the right way, and play the ball in the right place, and, with a fair opportunity for a stroke, would seldom fail to make or win a chase 'better than two.' He had a very strong defence to what was formerly, to a greater extent than it is now, the favourite opening of the game, the side-wall service. His excellent judgment enabled him to estimate with accuracy the pace and twist of the ball, and thus to force with a strong over-hand twist and unerring aim for the backhand-corner of the 'dedans,' and the return of any stroke from any part of the court apparently presented no difficulty to him. He was the eldest son of 'Peter' Tompkins, and in 1847, being then twenty-one years of age, had advanced to the position of the first English professional. About this time he undertook the management of the court at Leamington, where he remained until 1849, when he became lessee of the court in James Street, Haymarket. For more than twenty years he was unquestionably the strongest of English players; when in his prime he could give about 15 to Mr. C. G. Taylor, who was certainly superior to Edmund's brothers, Alfred and John; it must, however, be remembered that the latter of these had scarcely attained to his best form until his elder brother had passed his fortieth year, and it is possible that John's severe stroke into the fore-hand corner, and his defence of the dedans, which has seldom, if ever, been surpassed, might have enabled him to reduce the odds had they met between 1870 and 1875. After this he played more 'en amateur' than 'en artiste,' but he continued to practise at the

Merton court at Oxford, of which he became lessee in 1866, and to take part in the annual exhibition matches at Lord's. In 1880 he was about equal to his brother John, but in July of that year he awoke the memory of the past by a very fine display of Tennis, and defeated George Lambert, receiving 15 for a bisque. This, however, was his last achievement, for in 1881 Lambert beat him at the same odds, in 1882 he attempted unsuccessfully to give a bisque to Mr. A. Lyttelton, and though he occasionally played single-handed up to 1886, we must look on his later performances less as a sample of his form than as an illustration of pure Tennis, of which he was so conspicuous an exponent.

Fortune at no time smiled on the most distinguished of living professional players, George Lambert, for the championship of Tennis having been silently ceded to him, he was deprived of the *éclat* which should attend the attainment of that honour, and when called upon to defend his position in 1885 he lost the memorable match already mentioned, and in the following year he was defeated in a match for the championship of England by Charles Saunders. He was also unfortunate enough to lose the only two matches he played on which a considerable stake depended. In 1869 Mr. Fisk, an American, after witnessing a fine display of Tennis on Lambert's part, offered to lay 3 to 2 on him in a best of 7 sets level match with myself. At the conclusion of the first day's play (June 24) the score stood at 2 sets all, but on July 11 succeeded in winning the odd game of the odd set. Again, in 1882, he was freely backed to give 15 to Mr. A. Lyttelton, who, playing in form that he perhaps has never surpassed, inflicted on him a crushing defeat. But I need hardly remind the *habitués* of the M.C.C of the unparalleled brilliancy of his play in 1872, 1873, and 1874, and the numerous defeats he inflicted on those who ventured to attack him in his own court. He was the earliest exponent of the severe or fast style of modern Tennis; he was one of the first players who had never used any but the tightly-strung racket and heavy balls now

in use, and I believe that this, rather than any originality of his own, was the cause of the adoption of a style which differed much from that of his predecessors. His muscular forearm and wrist enabled him to impart such cut to the ball that it would drop in the corner of the court like a 'poached egg,' and the accuracy and rapidity of his boasted force have never been rivalled or even approached. His game is essentially one of attack, not of defence; the volley is not his *forte*; he is too apt to strike at the ball instead of allowing the racket to do its own work, and his return from the back-hand corner lacked the precision of Barre or Edmund. But he evolved from his inner consciousness a return which no player has yet been able to imitate with any great success. When he mistrusts his power to return a ball well cut and placed in the fore-hand corner of the court, before it reaches the end-wall he can frequently anticipate its course during that infinitesimal fraction of a second that would be occupied before it falls on the floor after touching the end-wall, and with a stroke of his powerful wrist he returns it by a true *coup de temps*. It is not within the range of practical Tennis that this 'coup Lambert,' or Lambert's patent as it has been called, should result in anything but a wild and random stroke, but it must be remembered that the prevention of the establishment of a close chase should be attempted at any cost. He began Tennis at Oxford in 1859 as Sabin's marker, succeeding his elder brother John, who had shown extraordinary promise although only in his eighteenth year, but whose career was cut short by an early death. He remained there seven years, and in 1866, being then twenty-four years of age, became marker at Hampton Court. During his engagement there, which lasted three years, he improved rapidly, and continued to do so when he came to the M.C.C. court in St. John's Wood Road. He never acquired the accurate and careful style of play indispensable to a good giver of odds, nor could he intuitively grasp the idiosyncrasies of a court new to him; but in the year 1874, in the M.C.C. court, every feature of which was

familiar to him, I am convinced that his play rivalled that of Barre, and has never since been surpassed or even equalled. In 1875 whooping-cough, followed by a severe attack of acute rheumatic fever, prevented him from taking part in any matches, and a careful examination of the record of his subsequent performances demonstrate that he never again reached his earlier form, except, perhaps, in 1878. The muscular prostration caused by his match with Pettitt, and injuries resulting from a fall from a carriage in the following year, still further impaired his powers, but he can still occasionally recall to the memory of his former admirers his powerful cut and unique force. He is now manager of the court in East Road, Cambridge, where the young players at that university will find him a painstaking and competent instructor.

I now come to Pettitt. He probably at this moment is scarcely so strong as any of the above-mentioned players when at their best, but the rapidity of his progress and his extraordinary record of victories achieved in this country make me uncertain where he should be placed. He was born at Beckenham, in the county of Kent, in 1860, but as a boy emigrated to the United States, where he learned Tennis from Ted Hunt, formerly marker at Oxford, and subsequently at Boston. He came to England in 1883. He then had the reputation of being by far the best player on the other side of the Atlantic, but at that time his style could hardly have been more faulty than it was. He knew little about cutting the ball, he had never seen any good play, and a boasted force was a revelation to him. Nevertheless, his superb physique, his strong and accurate force, and his extraordinary skill in returning everything somehow, enabled him to contend, though unsuccessfully, in that year on even terms with Mr. Alfred Lyttelton, and, receiving 15 for a 'bisque,' to defeat George Lambert. In the course of that summer he paid a visit to Paris, and defeated Lesueur, the strongest player that could be found to oppose him, and he gained easy victories in matches he played with W. Lambert and John Tompkins, from whom,

however, he perhaps unnecessarily received some odds. His advent in 1884 was anticipated with eager interest; nor did he disappoint those who foresaw a great future for him. On April 19 he beat George Lambert at Brighton, receiving the same odds as on the previous occasion. On May 1 he beat me at evens in a match at Manchester by 3 sets to 1, the second hour of which was to me a bitter experience of exhaustion consequent on a contest with a young opponent endowed with such resources of return and hard-hitting powers, and on the 26th of the same month, having accustomed himself to English courts and English balls, he beat Mr. A. Lyttelton 3—0 at Lord's. On June 14 these young athletes met at Hampton Court, but on this occasion it was arranged that the professional should give the odds of half-fifteen, and the result was an unusually protracted struggle, in which no less than 353 strokes were played. Pettitt's excellent condition and staying powers enabled him to secure this match, 3 sets to 2, 191 strokes to 162. In the same year he beat Charles Saunders decisively at Lord's, giving half-fifteen for a 'bisque,' at whose hands, however, he received an equally signal defeat at Prince's Club when he attempted to give him half-fifteen on June 17. In the following year (1885) he gave half-fifteen for a bisque to the same player at Lord Fife's court at East Sheen on April 28, and in May he won the memorable match for the championship already recorded. He came again to this country in 1887, and it is much to be regretted that it was found to be impossible to arrange a match between him and Saunders in that year. He played two matches remarkable for their severe and protracted character with Mr. A. Lyttelton, the number of strokes recorded having exceeded 350 on each occasion, in both of which he succeeded in winning the odd set. He has not again left Boston, a matter to be regretted by his friends, for it is impossible for him to secure in America the advantages of practice with strong players, without which he cannot aspire to the very highest standard of play which assuredly might be within his reach. At present his style can

scarcely be looked on as a model for imitation. His early practice was in courts where success frequently attends a stroke played hard and low for a nick ; he has learnt but one service—the underhand twist—most effective, but wearisome alike to spectators and opponents ; he is not a master of the subtle refinements of that ideal feature of the game, the 'cut,' and, although his activity and admirable physique preclude any imputation of awkwardness, his stroke partakes more of the character of a 'hit' than the easy grace of a finished player. But he is a brilliant illustration of the proverb, 'Nothing succeeds like success,' and though I believe he is still capable of putting half-fifteen on to his present form, that form has been found good enough to enable him to defeat all comers, and no living player can show such a record of victories with so small a percentage of defeats.

The career of Charles Saunders is not typical of the laws of heredity, for no past or present member of his family has attained to distinction in any branch of athletics ; but his own achievements entitle him to a place in the front rank of Tennis players. He was born in 1861, and at the age of thirteen was employed on the lawn-tennis grounds of Prince's Club, Hans Place, and two years later he was engaged as marker in the Tennis court of that club under Holden. He showed early promise of future excellence, but he played no match in public until the spring of 1883, when he encountered Edmund Tompkins at Brighton, and, receiving half-fifteen for a 'bisque,' won every set. In the summer of the same year I gave him successfully, but with difficulty, half-fifteen at Lord's, and he lost two matches, receiving fifteen from George Lambert. The annals of 1884 record his matches with Pettitt, mentioned above (p. 117). In 1885 he went to America, and played three exhibition matches with the same player, from whom on each occasion he received fifteen for a 'bisque.' Of these contests he won two and lost one. Since that time he has gained physical and constitutional strength, and by assiduous practice, well worthy of imitation, has attained to a certainty of return, accu-

racy of volley, and precision of stroke which have seldom, if ever, been rivalled ; and he is as great a master of defence as Lambert, whom he deposed from the position of English champion in 1887, had been of attack. A critical observer, however, will remark that his first stroke presents less difficulty—I had almost said impossibility—of return than that of Lambert, and that his 'boasted force' lacks the brilliancy and accuracy of our late champion. Saunders has also played matches at Whittlebury, Bridport, and the M.C.C., Queen's, and Prince's Clubs, with varying success against Mr. Lyttelton, and the gradual augmentation of the odds he has been found able to give indicates the marked improvement of his game. His display of Tennis at Lord's on July 13, 1889, when he gave fifteen for a bisque to our amateur champion, and consecutively won three hard-fought sets, will not easily be forgotten by those who witnessed it.

M. Antoine Anselme Mosneron was for a long series of years the best of French amateurs, and was undoubtedly a little stronger than his English rival, Mr. C. G. Taylor. The feature of his game that I can best recollect was a twisted sidewalk service, which necessarily forced the striker-out to or even beyond the pass-line, and was difficult to return into any part of the court except the back-hand corner. M. Mosneron was very quick anticipating this stroke, and advancing to the galleries would place himself in a position which would enable him to volley the ball upon the tambour with unerring accuracy. He was a strong player in 1860, although forty-nine years of age, and though he left off playing soon after that time, for some subsequent years was an *habitué* of the dedans of the court of Paris, where his genial courtesy endeared him alike to friends and strangers. He died on March 28, 1869.

Mr. Charles G. Taylor, who was born in 1818, was one of the most active men of his day, and was remarkable for his dexterity in all games of skill. He was one of the best amateur billiard-players of the time, and a long series of his achievements are recorded in cricket scores and biographies. His

style at Tennis was not remarkable for severity or strength, but his power of return was unique. It seemed impossible that he should miss a volley, or a half-volley, usually impossible for his adversary to play a ball so that he could not reach it. It may then be asked, 'How was he ever beaten?' My reply is, his attack was never strong, and—as in war, or in chess, so it is in Tennis—attack will in the long run beat defence, and a weak spot will be found in the strongest armour. It may easily be realized that when two such players as Mr. Taylor and E. Tompkins, both of whom were more remarkable for defence than attack, met in the Tennis court, the rests would be long and the display of pure Tennis most enjoyable. I can remember a few such encounters, but Mr. Taylor was a man of nervous temperament, and in 1858, or perhaps even before that time, he had begun to prefer the three-handed or four-handed game to a contest with a single opponent. He thoroughly understood this form of Tennis, and with the aid of Mr. (now Sir Francis) Geary, or General Lambert, amateurs of moderate strength, he would make a good fight with E. Tompkins, then in the zenith of his powers.

The next in chronological order is the present writer, whom the enjoyment of excellent health, immunity from accident, and an intense love of the game, enabled early to assume, and to maintain for a longer period than often falls to the lot of an amateur, his position in the Tennis world. But this (to use the words of Thackeray's immortal Jeames) is 'eggatism, which I aboar'; so I will close these brief memoirs of distinguished players with a few remarks on the characteristics of the play of our present amateur champion.

Mr. Alfred Lyttelton is the youngest and not the least athletic of eight athletic brothers, who have all made their mark in the chronicles of sports and pastimes. Tall, strong, and active, he as a boy distinguished himself at football, running, fives, and all manly exercises; he was one of the best racket players of his time, and he earned highest honours in the cricket-field, whether standing in front of the wicket with a bat, or behind it with the gloves.

When at his best he displays, perhaps, the most brilliant power of return that can present itself to the imagination of a Tennis player; indeed, his return of a difficult stroke is occasionally more severe than his treatment of a *balle à la main*. This severity, however, is incompatible with the accuracy of a Barre or a Tompkins, and cannot but be the cause of an occasional indulgence in the *luxury* of a ball in the net. He prefers a *floor* game, seldom playing for the dedans unless he really means business; but his force, when he has occasion to resort to it, is as powerful as that of any past or present player. His game is thoroughly honest, he poses himself so resolutely for his stroke that his intention is not easily disguised, and he rarely attempts to mask his play or to *prendre le défaut*. Like most exponents of a strong and brilliant, if occasionally uncertain, style of play, he appears to far greater advantage when competing with a first-rate player than when giving odds or in a contest with a competitor whose standard of play is not equal to his own. A memorable instance of this occurred in his match with that cleverest of all clever players, Mr. R. D. Walker, in the preliminary competition in 1886 for the M.C.C. Challenge Prize. Mr. Walker's stroke, seldom cut, but always well placed, his play for the dedans, seldom forced, but always straight, his intuitive judgment in timing any ball, and his patience and self-possession, enabled him to win two sets in this match, which was thus invested with unexpected interest. Many of Mr. Lyttelton's performances have been already mentioned, so I will express a hope that many more victories may be added to his record, and a regret, which will find ready response in the hearts of all Tennis-players, that his profession occupies time which might, in their opinion, be better employed.

It would be interesting to mention the performances of other players, professional and amateur, but I have thought it best to confine my remarks to the careers of those about whose position as first-class players there could be no dispute, and will invite the readers to descend for a moment from the sublime to the ridiculous while mention is made of some of the

eccentric *tours de force* which have been seen in Tennis courts at different times. They are not worthy of imitation, scarcely of record, but, like the sack-race at athletic sports, or the pig-hunt at a regatta, which have always been found to be diverting to spectators, they innocuously illustrate the *neque semper arcum* maxim so valuable to all who earnestly devote themselves to any avocation. Towards the end of the last century, Masson would have a cask placed for him at each end of the court: he undertook to deliver his service while standing in one of these, and, when on the hazard-side, to await his opponent's service in a similar attitude, and also to jump into, and out of, one of the casks between each stroke and return. His contemporary, Pillet, is said to have played a strong game with a 'sabre de bois,' a wooden implement about three feet in length. Pettitt displays great skill with a similar weapon made of pine wood. 'Biboche' once played a match arrayed in the full panoply of the uniform of the National Guard in heavy marching order. In 1844, Mr. C. Taylor played, but lost, a match—the best of five sets—with Mr. Ricardo, at Brighton, whilst riding on a pony who was shod with leather shoes for the occasion, and is said to have appeared to take a personal interest in the affair.[1] In 1868 I played, but lost, a match with Mr. Heneage Dering, who formerly had been very fond of Tennis, but who had not played for some time, using a constable's staff, and found this implement far better adapted to the work it was then for the first time called upon to perform than might have been expected. John Tompkins has a boot-jack which must be worth its weight in silver, for it has won him many a half-crown from amateurs unsuspicious of its efficacy. The attempts which have been made to hit a Tennis ball with a soda-water bottle are of too *bizarre* a character to be worthy of consideration, but mention must be made of a feat which can be performed by anyone who combines excellence as a 'field' at cricket with a knowledge of Tennis, namely, catching the ball and throwing it—of course

[1] *Bell's Life.*

from the spot where it was caught. Mr. Courtenay Boyle was a good exponent of this game, and could easily defeat any player who was encumbered with a racket. The palms of his hands might now and then tingle after an attempt to catch a really hard force, but this is probably the only satisfaction an opponent would derive from such an encounter.

I will not further dilate on the attractions of a game whose devotees invariably display an enthusiasm for its fascinations which I need not try to augment, so will take leave of my subject with an expression of hope that the perusal of these pages may awaken and encourage the ambition of some young athlete, and of confidence that Tennis will flourish for as many centuries in the future as it has in the past as the KING of GAMES and the GAME of KINGS.

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Conditions for a contest between Saunders and Pettitt for the world's championship were agreed to while this work was in the press. The match will shortly be played in Sir E. Guinness's court at Dublin.

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## *GLOSSARY*

*Balle à la main.*—A ball 'in-play' which offers an opportunity for a decisive stroke.

*Bandeau.*—The lintel or plate which is between the lower edge of a pent-house and an opening.

*Battery.*—That part of the side-wall which is below the galleries.

*Bisque.*—The recipient of a 'bisque' can claim one stroke at any time in one set.

*Boast, to.*—To return the ball so that it strikes either of the side-walls before it strikes the end-wall.

*Chase.*—A stroke in abeyance, which has been made by one player, and must be played for by the other. See Laws 17–24.

*Coup de temps.*—A return executed more by intuitive perception than by observation of the flight of the ball.

*Cut.*—To impart vertical spin to the ball with the racket.

*Dedans.*—The opening in the end-wall on the service-side of the court (the spectators present in this gallery are sometimes called the 'dedans').

*Defend.*—A player who prevents or tries to prevent his opponent from winning a chase which he has made is said to 'defend' the chase.

*Double.*—A ball struck after it has touched the floor a second time.

*Drop.*—A ball is said to 'drop' when it touches the floor or the post of an opening, or enters an opening without having previously touched any part of the court, except a wall, or a pent-house, or the net.

*Fair-off.*—A ball is said to be 'fair-off' when it returns from the end-wall and offers an opportunity for an easy stroke.

*Fall.*—A ball is said to 'fall,' when, after having dropped, it touches the floor again, or touches the net, or enters an opening.

*Fault.*—A service which fails to comply with the conditions of a 'good' service. See Laws 4–6.

*First-stroke.*—The return of the service.

*Force.*—A stroke played, either direct or boasted, for the dedans with some strength. A ball tossed or played gently is not called a 'force.'

*Galleries.*—The openings beneath the side pent-house on each side of the net.

*Good.*—A stroke is 'good' if it is played in accordance with the provisions of the laws.

*Grille.*—The opening in the end-wall on the hazard-side of the court.

*Half-volley, to.*—To strike the ball immediately after it has dropped.

*Hazard-side.*—That part of the court which is between the net and the end-wall, on the left of the marker's compartment.

*In-play.*—A ball served or returned is said to be 'in-play' until it has fallen, or has entered an opening, or has gone out of court, or has touched a gallery-post, or a player, or unless it be a fault.

*Love game.*—A game in which one player wins four consecutive strokes, or, in the case of deuce and advantage, five consecutive strokes.

*Love set.*—A set in which one player wins six consecutive games, or, in the case of an advantage set, seven consecutive games.

*Nick.*—A stroke in which the ball dropping or falling touches the floor and wall simultaneously.

*Openings.*—The dedans, grille, and galleries. The dedans, grille, and the last gallery on the hazard-side are called the winning openings.

*Pass.*—A service which, not being a fault, drops in the court between the pass-line and the main-wall, or goes across the pass-line on the pent-house.

*Rest.*—A 'rest' commences when the service is delivered, and continues so long as the ball is in play.

*Return.*—To play the service or any subsequent stroke of a rest back over the net.

*Service.*—The starting of the ball in-play. See Laws 3–10.

*Service-side.*—That part of the court which is between the net and the end-wall on the right of the marker's compartment.

*Stop.*—To prevent (by a volley) a ball from entering an opening.

*Strike-out.*—To receive the service, and so to play the first stroke.

*Twist, to.*—To impart horizontal spin to the ball with the racket.

*Volley, to.*—To strike the ball in-play before it drops.

In the 'Annals of Tennis,' pp. 155–160, will be found a complete schedule of definitions. I have ventured to quote many of these verbatim (indeed, no other course is left open to the lexicographer), to express a few in different words, and to omit some, which have been elsewhere explained, from this glossary, which is given in the hope that it will assist the reader to interpret the technical terms which occur in these pages.

# LAWN TENNIS

BY

C. G HEATHCOTE

## *NOTE*

OF the many friends who have assisted me, my thanks are in the first place due to Mr. Julian Marshall, who generously placed at my disposal the unique collection of Lawn-tennis literature which ever since 1874 he has been laboriously collecting; next, to the distinguished players whose contributions will have earned the gratitude of my readers as well as my own, and to Messrs. Sutton, who have given me much valuable information on the creation and maintenance of lawns; to those gentlemen (and their name is legion) who have liberally responded to my inquiries on various subjects; and, lastly, to Messrs. Wilberforce, Dwight, and Brownlee, whose published treatises are so clear and so exhaustive as to be almost an embarrassment to a writer who succeeds them.

MEASURING THE NET

# CHAP. I

## THE ORIGIN OF LAWN TENNIS

Those that with haste will make a mighty fire
Begin it with weak straws.

SHAKSPEARE, *Julius Cæsar*, Act i. sc. 3

OF the great family of sports and pastimes which fill up so large a part of English country life, Lawn Tennis is much the youngest member. Hunting, shooting, and fishing, which in the nineteenth century are practised as fine arts, are nevertheless the developments of pursuits which owed their existence to the

prime wants of savage nature. The elaborate coach with its team of thoroughbred horses is the lineal descendant of the humble manure-cart, to which the overburdened peasant first harnessed a donkey. Cricket looks back through a century of authentic history and ages of myth to its apocryphal commencement. Tennis has for hundreds of years been the sport of princes, a puzzle to the multitude, and the despair of nine-tenths of its votaries. Even Golf, the newest madness of the moment, was chartered by royalty and practised by a little band of worshippers for two centuries and a half before, in these last days, it claimed a home on every common, forced a club into every hand, and deposited a ball in every bunker.

But lawn tennis is a new game. Viewed as an institution, that is, as a creature controlled by laws, based upon precedents, and protected by associations, it is barely in its teens. Its courts are hallowed by no historical incidents. The legends to which other sports pretend, and which in time ripen into accepted facts, are scanty and unsatisfying. No anecdotes of its precocious infancy can be gleaned by the inquiring chronicler, nor can even its pedigree be traced with the usual antiquarian accuracy through the various stages of its development from the elementary game of ball played by Nausicaa on the shores of Phæacia to the Wimbledon tournament of the present year of grace. By many people, indeed, the game is supposed to have sprung like Minerva from the head of Jove, fully grown, and equipped with the newest pattern of racket, and the last championship ball, in or about the year 1874. This is far from being the case: nor is such a birth consistent either with experience or with the laws of nature. The production of a game, not less than the evolution of a species, presupposes a past of considerable duration, changes of more or less magnitude, and a stream of tendency more or less continuous in a given direction. Nor is this all. We shall expect to find some analogy between the infinitely great and the relatively little. The products of civilization have to pass through much the same phases as civilization itself has undergone. The experi-

ences of the child are identical with those of the parent. We shall not be surprised to find in the history of a game the traces of a stage to which mankind in general has been compelled to submit, viz. the mythical epoch, of which the historian can say little more than that the events alleged to have taken place never had any real existence at all, being only beautiful tales embodying the dreams, the wishes, and the aspirations of men. *Se non è vero è ben trovato.* Thence it passed into the legendary stage, when we have no longer to do with the region of pure myth, nor can we predicate with certainty in regard to any given incident that it could by no possibility have taken place. Fact and fiction are mixed up together, and the legend which comes down to us is a distorted and exaggerated representation of something which did actually take place. These two epochs in history correspond with the stages of lawn tennis prior to Major Wingfield's production of Sphairistike, or, as the enemies of the new-comer called it, 'Sticky.' The next stage is the anarchic or patriarchal age, when the local despot, represented, let us say, by the eldest brother at home during the university vacation, dictates to an obedient household or tribe the conventions, the decencies, the prescriptions, and laws of a narrow but sufficient civilization. Laws there are in abundance, but there is no correspondence between one tribal code and another, nor any subordination to a central authority. This is an age of heroes. The strongest and boldest warriors of each infinitesimal sept is in his own opinion, and that of those who surround him, the champion of the world; and in the absence of larger areas of competition, which will in a later age receive the name of championship tournaments, the local but very vulnerable Achilles, amid the plaudits of his village, drags down to the dust the reputation of a previously unconquerable Hector. But this stage also is transitory, and as it has been in history, so in lawn tennis it is followed by the monarchic period. The people will have a king to reign over them. The tribes, by conquest, mutual attraction, or otherwise, are compelled to coalesce. The longing for a settled

government, as well as for easier means of intercourse with neighbours, creates a nation, and the nation, when created, bows down at the feet of the most powerful agent within itself, be it individual or association. So the scattered tribes and families of lawn tennis submitted themselves in the first instance to the Marylebone Cricket Club, and afterwards to other associations which will be described in their several places ; and so this epoch also comes to an end, and the reign of law and order is inaugurated. But the march of intellect continues. The yearning for independence, the impatience of control not self-imposed, and the jealousy which autocratic power though it be that of the Antonines inspires, leads in time to an irresistible demand for representative government. It is not home rule which is demanded, but federalism, in order to secure an equality of rights and a better adjustment of power, and thus the polity of lawn tennis passes at last into its final stage, and a republic of equal and co-ordinate clubs meeting in association is the supreme realization of the aspirations which have swayed and directed the minds of lawn-tennis players throughout the mythical, the legendary, the anarchic, and the despotic eras in succession.

So far as this analogy holds good in respect to lawn tennis, the title of earliest lawgiver, as well as much of the credit of civilizing the game by introducing it to the notice of the public, is undoubtedly due to Major Wingfield, who in the year 1874 patented a game to which he gave the name of Sphairistike ; but the root must be sought much deeper, and conjecture may amuse itself by deriving the germs of Major Wingfield's game, and the main features of lawn tennis, from any or all of the pastimes which have preceded it, of which the principle has been the striking and returning of a ball or shuttlecock across a net or cord whether by the agency of the hand, a battledore, or a racket, whether the game be called Pallone, Longue Paume, Handball, Tennis, Sphairistike, or Badminton. The earlier notices of tennis would seem to indicate that it was played in the open air, and that the erection of courts was the invention of a later

age.[1] If this is so, lawn tennis may claim a higher dignity and a longer pedigree, while it loses the right to any merit on the ground of originality. Some form of out-of-door tennis seems to have been played almost from time immemorial, though the notices of it are so few and scattered as to suggest that its sporadic reappearances were experimental only, and failed to attract general interest. Towards the close of the last century, however, some such revival proved so popular that 'Field tennis' is mentioned in the 'Sporting Magazine' of September 29, 1793, as a dangerous rival even to cricket.[2] There are records of a similar game dating from about the year 1834, described under the name of 'long tennis' in a book entitled 'Games and Sports,' being an appendix to 'Manly Exercises' and 'Exercises for Ladies,' by Donald Walker (Thomas Hurst, St. Paul's Churchyard, 1837). The Leamington Club claimed to have been acquainted with it for fifteen years before the revival by Major Wingfield, while it is said to have been played at Sir W. Scott's country seat, Ancrum in Roxburghshire, about the year 1864, as well as near Leyton about 1868. Lord Arthur Hervey, now Bishop of Bath and Wells, when the exigencies of his profession debarred him from his favourite game of tennis, had with his family and guests for many years played a substitute founded on tennis, and scored in tennis fashion, on the lawn of his rectory in Suffolk.

In more remote antiquity, even the patronage of Royalty is not wanting, for it is recorded that 'When Queen Elizabeth was entertained at Elvetham in Hampshire, by the Earl of Hertford, after dinner, about three o'clock, ten of his servants, Somersetshire men, in a square green court, before her Majestie's windows, did hang up lines, squaring out the form of a tennis court, and making a cross line in the middle; in this square they played, five to five, with handball, with bord and cord, as they tearme it, to the great liking of Her Highness'—Nicoll's 'Progress of Queen

[1] An investigation of this nature is beyond the scope of the present treatise, but those who are curious in the matter may refer to the *Annals of Tennis* by Julian Marshall, the 'Field' Office, 1–12, 99, *et al.*

[2] See *Annals of Tennis*, by J. Marshall, p. 99.

Elizabeth.'[1] It is probable that these instances might be largely increased by a diligent inquirer who should consider the search to be worth making. However that may be, it is certain that a species of lawn tennis, closely resembling in principle, if not in detail, that of the present day, had been for many years practised both in Russia and on here and there a lawn in this country, though it had taken no general hold on the public taste. But for all practical purposes it may be said that the epoch of lawn tennis dates from no more distant a period than 1874, when Major Wingfield resuscitated it by the introduction of Sphairistike; so that, as compared with almost all other sports or games practised in England, it is still in its infancy. This infancy, however, was, like that of Hercules, one of extraordinary vigour. While still in the cradle it strangled the rival games of Sphairistike and Badminton, and afterwards extinguished croquet as easily as the Greek hero crushed the Erymanthian boar. Something indeed of the rapidity with which lawn tennis superseded croquet must be attributed to a characteristic of the latter game which tended to smooth the path of the new-comer. The pastimes of England had been masculine games, and it had never been the custom for women to share in the sports of the country to as great an extent as they do at present. When croquet made its appearance it was a new experience for women to be able to compete with men on tolerably even terms, and for sisters to partake in the amusements of their brothers with a fair chance of holding their own in the struggle. This feature, as well as the obvious social opportunities which croquet presented to all ages and to either sex, was a chief cause of its popularity. In default of a stronger attraction, a croquet-lawn had become the indispensable adjunct to every country house, parsonage, and villa, as well as a point of meeting and a sphere of rivalry to neighbours in every part of the kingdom. Trees which had been the delight of paterfamilias, and flower-beds which were to the mistresses of houses as the apple of an eye, had

1. Ex. rel. Lieut.-Col. A. C. H. Stewart. *Field*, Dec. 12, 1874.

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been ruthlessly removed to give scope for those passionate strokes which satisfied for the moment the vindictiveness of the most relentless croquet player. The turf of a thousand lawns—the gardener's pride and the neighbours' envy—condemned by young enthusiasts as too soft and mossy to allow the wooden ball to travel easily to its destined hoop, had been sacrificed to the exigencies of the momentary fashion, and had been replaced by a firmer and more lively surface, so that not only had social gatherings for the purpose of play become a necessary part of English life, but an arena to some extent fit for the purpose of lawn tennis existed already in every garden. Assisted perhaps by these circumstances, and recommended by its own inherent merits, lawn tennis made its way into popular favour with remarkable rapidity. Prior to the appearance of Major Wingfield's game, a species of outdoor tennis played on the grass may perhaps have been familiar to a few score of persons. By the summer of 1875 it had become universal; but though its worshippers were many, they were not of one creed. Methods were various, and laws were non-existent. This state of things could not continue, and, after much discussion and correspondence in the columns of the 'Field,' a sub-committee of the Marylebone Cricket Club was deputed to frame a code. The task to which these gentlemen addressed themselves was a difficult one. They had to evolve order out of chaos, to formulate principles from imperfect analogies, and, with scanty experience to guide them, they were required to create a game. The code of the Marylebone Club was issued in 1875, and, though soon superseded, for the moment it served its purpose, which could not have been attained by any less authoritative organization, of bringing into harmony a variety of discordant methods.

The need of some such paramount authority may be inferred from the circumstance that prior to the code the court was of no prescribed length or breadth, while the height of the net and the position of the service-line were a matter of discretion. At one time, indeed, the necessity of a service-line

was not universally admitted, and a competent judge once expressed an unhesitating opinion that any service dropping in its appropriate half-court ought to be returned by a good player. Such was the state of anarchy when the M.C.C. code appeared. Some measure of its utility is supplied by the fact that the length of the court has never since been altered, that it prescribed a definite height for the net, and maximum and minimum limits for the size and weight of balls, and, above all, introduced some uniformity of practice where, up to that time, every man, like the Israelite of old, had 'done that which was right in his own eyes.' In short, like Augustus, 'frena licentiæ injecit,' if it cannot be added 'emovitque culpas,' for alas! to eliminate faults from lawn tennis is as much beyond the power of any committee, however influential, as of the autocratic master of the Roman world.

## CHAPTER II

### THE FIRST TOURNAMENT

> Come the three corners of the world in arms,
> And we shall shock them.
>
> SHAKSPEARE, *K. John*, Act v. sc. 7

FROM what has been said it would appear that the origin of lawn tennis is to be sought, not so much in out-door precursors or modifications of tennis, in Pallone, Longue Paume, and similar pastimes, as in tennis itself, which, once known and enjoyed, does not easily lose its hold on its admirers. Debarred from the game they had loved and practised at the University or in London, some few enthusiasts had, as we have seen, approached as nearly to their ideal as was possible under altered conditions.

There is, in fact, a form of tennis which in its essential features corresponds almost precisely with lawn tennis. It is now not often seen, though recommended to beginners as leading to the acquisition of return, and is known as 'Long Fives.' It is, in fact, tennis without the embarrassing addition of 'chases,' and must necessarily have been known to every tennis player. In speaking, therefore, of the discovery or invention of Major Wingfield, the word is convenient rather than strictly accurate. It is possible, indeed, that Major Wingfield had seen, and perhaps taken part in, one of these occasional resuscitations of tennis. His merit consists in the fact that he was the first to realize that there was, in what he had seen or heard, a capacity of adaptation to the needs of society: and this is probably as much as can be said for the claim to origin-

ality of any inventor, however distinguished, or any discovery, however valuable.

The specification deposited by Major Wingfield with a view to obtaining a patent is dated February 23, 1874, and declares the invention to be 'A new and improved portable court for playing the ancient game of tennis.' The patentee explained the principle of his invention to be the erection of two standards, twenty-one feet apart, with an oblong net between them. Triangular nets forming side-walls to the court were to be placed at right angles to the oblong net on each side; there were to be also a serving crease, in and out courts, right and left courts, and boundaries, marked with paint, coloured cord, or tape. Such was the description, and a diagram was appended showing the position of the net, wing-nets, and lines marking the court and serving crease. There is a curious discrepancy between the description and the diagram. From the former it is obvious that the court was intended to be rectangular, as the wing-nets were to be at right angles to the oblong net; but in the diagram the court is delineated as wider at the base-line than at the net. Still, it is clear that Major Wingfield intended his game to be in accordance with the diagram, and he at all times claimed the 'hour-glass shape' as one of the main principles of his invention. A month later a few short and simple rules were published apparently by the authority of Major Wingfield, though not in his name; but for the most part they are definitions of the court rather than rules of play. They do not state in terms that the court was to have the hour-glass shape, but from the illustration appended it appears that this must have been the case. The court was to be twenty yards long by ten wide at the base-lines. One side of the net, which was to be 4 ft. 8 in. high, was the 'in,' or serving court, and this was not divided by any lines; but in the centre of it, not far from the net, was a lozenge-shaped 'service crease,' in which the server was to stand. In the 'out' court a service-line was to be drawn, the distance from the net being undefined, and the space between the service-line and the base-lines was divided into two

equal courts, and the ball was to be served alternately into these courts. It is to be observed that the modern method of serving is the exact reverse of that proposed in Major Wingfield's rules. The illustration above referred to is here roughly reproduced, omitting certain trees and shrubs introduced in the

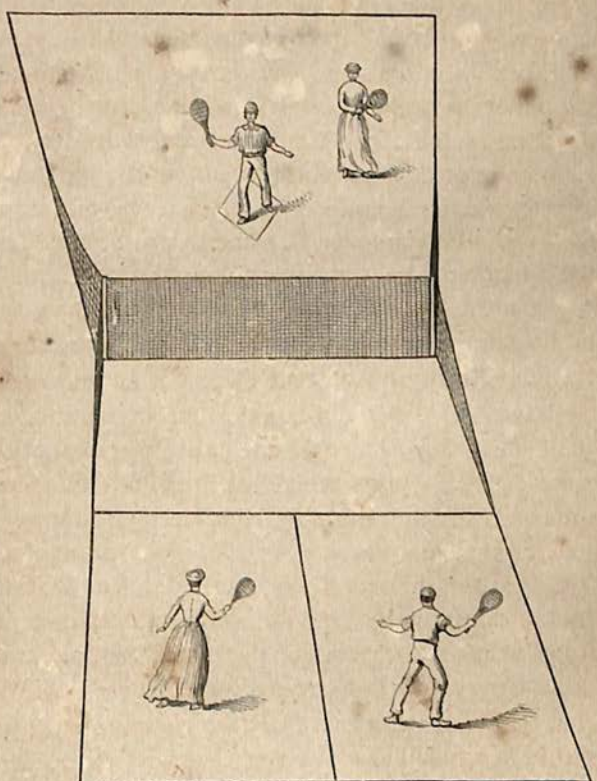


DIAGRAM OF MAJOR WINGFIELD'S GAME OF SPHAIRISTIKE

original by the artist, which were probably designed to aid the pictorial effect, but which in practice would have constituted hazards of a most effective description. These hazards, for whatever purpose introduced, have at least proved prophetic, for on countless lawns, otherwise perfect, encroaching shrubs have been blessed or anathematized as in turn they either served

the purpose of the server or impeded the stroke of the striker out.

It is singular that a game which has proved to be essentially one for the summer should at the outset have been specially recommended to the public as capable of being played on ice. Many attempts have been made in this direction, but they have met with little success. Nor is the reason hard to find. Lawn-tennis balls do not bound well upon ice, but even were it otherwise, lawn tennis and ice are not adapted to each other. The better a man skates, the less likely is he to succeed in playing lawn tennis upon ice, unless he reduces himself to the level of the inferior performer who is content to shuffle about on the flat of his skates. In truth it can hardly be otherwise, at least in England, where the upright position, the unbent knee, and large flowing curves are the essential elements of good skating, while lawn tennis requires absolute flexibility and quick irregular movement. The highest merit of either pursuit is a positive defect in the other. Quite apart, however, from the risk of transporting the infant game to an alien and incompatible element, there were many dangers to be surmounted, and many enemies, for the most part appearing in the guise of friendship, to be overcome. It was in danger of 'over-coddling' by one set of self-constituted nurses, who apprehended risk from the slightest breath of criticism, while another set were perhaps over-anxious to invest it with the full privileges of manhood before it had learned to walk alone. While eager partisans on the one hand piteously entreated that the game might not be spoiled, as had been the case with croquet, by the introduction of rules, 'complicating it, and destroying its present pleasing simplicity which any fellow can understand,' another faction was imperiously demanding legislation, without which they maintained that the precocious infant was likely to die of inanition. Meanwhile, the author was claiming that his invention should at least be preserved from the contaminating influence of tennis and rackets. This state of things was terminated by a proposal

from Mr. R. A. Fitzgerald, the Hon. Sec. of the Marylebone Cricket Club, to the effect that a meeting of lawn-tennis players should be held at 'Lord's,' in order to draw up a code which might obtain at least a provisional acceptance. The meeting was held early in 1875, and the Tennis Committee of the Marylebone Cricket Club were requested to frame rules. On May 24 the new code was issued under the sanction of the names of Hon. Spencer Ponsonby Fane, Hon. E. Chandos Leigh, Hon. C. G. Lyttelton, W. Hart Dyke, Esq., and J. M. Heathcote, Esq. In substance it provided that the court be divided into two equal parts by posts 7 ft. in height, and 24 ft. apart, with a net 5 ft. high at the posts and 4 ft. high at the centre. Base-lines 30 ft. in length were to be drawn at a distance of 39 ft., and service-lines at a distance of 26 ft. from the net. The players were to be distinguished as 'Hand-in' and 'Hand-out.' Hand-in alone could serve, or score; and on losing a stroke he became hand-out. The service was to be delivered with one foot outside the base-line, and was required to drop between the net and the service-line of the court diagonally opposite to that in which the server stood. If he failed to serve the ball over the net, he lost the stroke and became hand-out, but it was a fault only if the ball dropped in the wrong court or over the service-line. The balls were to be $2\frac{1}{4}$ in. in diameter and $1\frac{1}{2}$ oz. in weight. The game was fifteen up, as in rackets, but instead of being 'set' at fourteen all, the score was to be called deuce, then advantage, as in tennis. In double matches the partner of the striker out might take a service dropping in the wrong court. Thus, it will be seen that the hour-glass shape claimed by Major Wingfield as his special invention was adopted by the Marylebone Cricket Club, and Major Wingfield on his part cordially accepted the new rules.

This code, valuable as it was at the time, was short-lived, and hardly any matches are recorded as having taken place under it. It was probably adopted in a handicap match, reported as having been played at Cambridge in the month of June 1875, which was won by H. Leaf, Esq., late a Harrow

boy, the first, but, as will be seen, by no means the last, success achieved as the result of practice at soft or 'Squash'-ball rackets at that school. In the early days of the game, the ball had been almost, if not quite, universally uncovered, but on December 5, 1874, a letter appeared in the 'Field,' signed J. M. Heathcote, stating that the writer had found advantage in covering the balls with white flannel, which made them bound better, while they were also easier to see and to control. One of these balls used at Conington Castle, in Huntingdonshire, in the autumn of 1874, is still in existence, and though rude and archaic in construction is undoubtedly the direct lineal ancestor of the latest and most improved championship ball.

Meanwhile, the growing popularity of the game is attested by many circumstances. In the year 1875 lawn tennis, mainly by the instrumentality of Mr. Henry Jones, widely known as 'Cavendish,' was introduced into the programme of the All England Croquet Club, whose ground, situated at Wimbledon, a little to the west of the South-Western railway station, has ever since been the headquarters of the game; and the members of Prince's Club, Hans Place, had also adopted it, and were indeed so far in advance of their generation as to propose the lowering of the net to three feet. In the same year, too, was fulminated in the 'Field' the first denunciation of the practice of volleying at the net, a practice which is condemned as 'unscientific,' though a simple remedy for it is suggested in the widening of the net. In 1876, too, the adoption of tennis scoring was for the first time publicly advocated by Mr. H. Jones, on the ground that thereby the interest is better sustained and handicapping facilitated; while in the same year the diffusion of the game is proved by a record of play by the English colony at Homburg. In short, lawn tennis was by this time established in public favour as an agreeable pastime and an excuse for pleasant social gatherings. But a graver crisis was at hand, which should determine whether the game was to bask for a few seasons in the smiles of fashion, and then decay and die, as rinking had done, and as croquet was destined to do; or whether it was to

take its place permanently among recognised English sports, and so contribute to the formation of English character and English history.

This crisis is so important that it deserves more than a passing notice. The All England Croquet Club, of which Mr. J. H. Walsh, the editor of the 'Field,' was then honorary secretary, had already added lawn tennis to its original object. Early in 1877 the committee determined to make it in name as well as in fact a lawn-tennis club, and it was accordingly for a short time designated as the All England Croquet and Lawn-Tennis Club, until in a year or two all mention of croquet was dropped, and it became a lawn-tennis club pure and simple. A few weeks later the Committee of the A. E. C. and L.-T. Club announced that a lawn-tennis championship meeting would be held at Wimbledon in the month of July. Mr. J. H. Walsh had induced the proprietors of the 'Field' to offer for competition a silver challenge cup of the value of twenty-five guineas; and if of late years many a local committee has been able to offer more costly prizes, a special and almost sacred value will, in the opinion of lawn-tennis enthusiasts, for ever attach to the trophy which, in the infancy of the game and amid all the uncertainties which necessarily surround a new and difficult experiment, the generosity of the 'Field' newspaper and the energy of Mr. Walsh enabled the Committee of the A. E. C. and L.-T. Club to offer to the lawn-tennis players of England. Chief among these uncertainties and difficulties was the question of rules. No important match had been hitherto played, nor had any tournament been conducted under the M.C.C. code. The Committee of the A. E. C. and L.-T. Club, while fully aware of the grave imperfections of that code, cannot but have been sensible of the serious danger incurred by a deviation from it. A vehement controversy had been maintained in the press on the relative merits and demerits of racket and tennis scoring respectively; nor was this the only topic for acrimonious discussion. The size of the court, the height of the net, the position of the service-line, the question

of faults, had been argued at great length and with considerable bitterness, and yet unanimity seemed as hopeless as ever. Prudence may have dictated an adherence as conservative as possible to the old lines, but the committee acted on a bolder and, as it has proved, a wiser instinct. Three gentlemen, Mr. Julian Marshall, Mr. Henry Jones, and Mr. C. G. Heathcote, were appointed a sub-committee with power to frame rules for the conduct of the championship meeting. Of these, Mr. Marshall and Mr. Jones had been the most prominent champions of the newer philosophy, and if their arguments were sharply controverted at the time, they had not been without effect. Compared, indeed, with the M.C.C. code, the new rules might appear revolutionary; but the public was, in fact, prepared for revolution, and in the course of a few weeks the unqualified success of the championship meeting disarmed, if it could not altogether extinguish, criticism. The principles of the new departure were:

1st. A rectangular court 26 yards long by 9 yards wide, the net being suspended from posts placed 3 ft. outside the court.

2nd. The adoption of tennis scoring in its entirety.

3rd. The allowance of one fault without penalty, whether the service dropped in the net, in the wrong court, or beyond the service-line. These principles have stood the test of time, and are still law. The M.C.C. code was followed in respect of the service-line, which was still to be 26 ft. from the net, and of the position of the server with one foot outside the base-line, two matters in which experience has shown a necessity for change, as has also been the case in regard to a service touching the net which for the purpose of the moment was declared good. The height of the net was fixed at 5 ft. at the posts and 3 ft. 3 in. at the centre, and a limit was prescribed to the balls of not less than $2\frac{1}{4}$ in. nor more than $2\frac{5}{8}$ in. diameter, and of $1\frac{1}{4}$ oz. to $1\frac{1}{2}$ oz. weight. In these respects also experience has dictated a change.

Such, without going minutely into details, were the condi-

tions under which the first lawn-tennis championship of England was decided. There were twenty-two competitors, of whom many were more or less familiar with tennis scoring, a circumstance which was perhaps fortunate for the legislators, as it prevented the expression of any marked dissatisfaction with the rules. Mr. Henry Jones acted as referee, but the machinery worked so smoothly that few difficult questions were submitted to him. The posts, nets, and balls were supplied by Messrs. Jefferies and Co., of Woolwich. The number of entries necessitated byes in the second and fourth rounds, as well as a supplementary match to decide the winners of the second and third prizes. The All-comers prize and the Championship were won by Mr. Spencer Gore, an old Harrovian and racket player; the second and third prizes being secured by Messrs. W. C. Marshall and C. G. Heathcote respectively, who were both tennis players. Mr. Gore had previously defeated Mr. M. Hankey and Mr. F. Langham, who had been proficient as tennis players, and whose style was modelled on that game. So far, therefore, as the result of one experiment could decide the question, the racket style appears thus early to have given proof of the superiority which it has ever since maintained. In Mr. W. C. Marshall Mr. Gore undoubtedly met and easily vanquished a strong exponent of the tennis style, but it is probable that among the ranks of professed tennis players one or two might have been found who, if they could have been induced to take up lawn tennis seriously, might have given the champion more trouble. As it was, Mr. Gore was much the best player of the year. He was gifted with a natural genius for all games, great activity, a long reach, and a strong and flexible wrist. In addition to these natural advantages he was emphatically a clever player, and created a game of his own which, had he not very early abandoned match playing, would have proved capable of easy adaptation to altered circumstances. Doubtless the volley has become in other hands a much more powerful attacking force, but Mr. Gore's volley, which was his own creation, was no mere pat over the net. He was the first

to realize, as the first and great principle of lawn tennis, the necessity of forcing his opponent to the back line, when he would approach the net, and by a dexterous turn of the wrist would return the ball at considerable speed, now in the fore-hand and now in the back-hand court, till, to borrow the expression of one of his best opponents of that year, his antagonist was 'ready to drop.' Though the hard over-hand service was not then invented, his service was more varied than that of almost all other players, and his under-hand service in particular was characterized by an extraordinary power of twist. However great may have been the talents of Mr. Gore's successors in the championship, those who recollect his play will assign him a very high place among players, especially when they remember how original he was in his method, and how little in the way of tradition or example contributed to its conception or development.

# CHAPTER III

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF LAWN TENNIS

I'll pawn my victories, all
My honours to you, upon his good returns.
SHAKSPEARE, *Timon*, Act iii. sc. 5

THE first lawn-tennis championship match was over: the shouts which greeted the victor had subsided: the secretary had noted with satisfaction the facility with which his club might recruit an exhausted exchequer with the shillings and half-crowns of a public eager for novelty: the adherents of the old method of scoring were half converted by the successful working of the new system: but, in spite of these triumphs, or, perhaps, by reason of them, so far from reposing in contentment on the merits of the recent rules, critics at once began to discover in them grave defects and important omissions. The most serious of these was the great preponderance of the service. Mr. H. Jones, from analysis of the scoring cards, states that, of 601 games played in the tournament, the server had won 376 to 225 won by the striker-out: in other words, a proportion in favour of service of five to three; or, if only the more even sets were chosen for comparison, of nine to five. If the modern fast over-hand service with the lowered net had been in vogue at this time, the undue preponderance of service would have been even more marked; but the players for the most part delivered a round-hand service which, though it had some pace, was notwithstanding far less formidable. Yet, as it was, the mere statement of the statistics made it evident that service was far too powerful. Three remedies presented themselves as obvious: to heighten the

net in the middle, to penalize a single fault, or to bring the service-line nearer to the net. Of these alterations a considerable body of partisans preferred the penalization of the first fault, while the All England Club advocated the course, shortly afterwards adopted, of bringing in the service-line. This was effected early in 1878 by a joint code of laws issued by the M.C.C. and the All England Club. The height of the net was reduced to 4 ft. 9 in. at the posts and 3 ft. at the centre, and the service-line was placed at a distance of 22 ft. from the net. The dimensions of the court, as adopted at Wimbledon, were preserved, and all idea of the hour-glass shape was finally dismissed. For the three-handed and four-handed games a width of 12 yards was prescribed, thus obviating the necessity of keeping the single and double courts distinct, an arrangement which on private lawns has proved very convenient. The weight of the balls was fixed at 2 oz., a somewhat excessive amount which has not been retained; but in most other respects these laws were almost identical with the rules framed by the All England Club for their own meeting, except that the M.C.C., with a truly conservative instinct, retained as an alternative the racket method of scoring, and in successive revisions of their rules continued to do so until 1883, when the alternative method was definitively abandoned. In 1878 there was some reason for retaining it, as in the previous year several matches had been scored on that principle, including a four-handed tournament at Prince's Club in June, one at Deddington in August, and one held by the Wirral Club in October. It was, however, rarely employed afterwards, and long before 1883 had become wholly obsolete. Under the joint rules of the two clubs (excepting, of course, the alternative method), the second All England Championship meeting was held in July 1878. Thirty-four competitors entered, of whom the most eminent were Messrs. P. F. Hadow, L. Erskine, E. B. Brackenbury, A. T. Myers, C. G. Hamilton, who in Tennis had successfully represented the University of Cambridge in that year against Oxford; Mr. H. F. Lawford, whose name is now

so well known in the lawn-tennis world, but who on this occasion made his first public appearance, and the Honourable G. Montgomerie. The most exciting match was that between Messrs. Erskine and Hamilton, who in the fourth round played five sets, the last of which on more than one occasion depended on a single stroke. The championship match produced a keen struggle between Mr. Hadow, who had in the preliminary rounds defeated all his antagonists without losing a set, and Mr. S. Gore, the champion of the previous year, and resulted in the victory of Mr. Hadow by three sets to love. It is no disparagement to the winner to add that Mr. Gore was suffering from a sprained wrist, which must have placed him at a disadvantage. Mr. Hadow, like his predecessor, had been a Harrow boy, and was proficient at rackets. Without much severity either of service or stroke, he placed with great accuracy, and displayed a certainty of return which had not been hitherto equalled, and perhaps has hardly ever been excelled. If he did not invent the lob, he was the first to practise it with any great success, and he met and vanquished Mr. Gore's tactics by a free use of this resource. Mr. Hadow shortly afterwards left England for Ceylon, and has not appeared again in important matches. Mr. Erskine took the second prize, and Mr. Lawford the third, in this tournament. Those who of late years have seen and appreciated the 'suddenness, the accuracy, and the terrible speed of Mr. Lawford's strokes'[1] will, perhaps, be surprised to learn that at this time the second of these qualities was alone remarkable—a proof, if any were needed, that a strong game can only be built up by slow degrees and by much patient perseverance. The result of the analysis of service showed that, of 431 games played by good or fairly equal players, 229 were won by the server, and 202 by the striker-out, the advantage of service being about $8\frac{1}{2}$ to $7\frac{1}{2}$. This result was considered satisfactory, and no further change in the service-line was for the time considered necessary. It is clear, however, that already the volleyer at the net had given

[1] 'Form in Lawn Tennis,' by J. Dwight, *Scribner's Mag.*, vi. 132.

rise to a burning question. Not only did he stand persistently close to the net, and frequently kill the best strokes of his opponent, but occasionally he invaded the territory of his adversary and volleyed the ball before it had passed the net. An instance had indeed occurred in the championship match of 1878. It was proposed on the one hand that a penalty should be imposed on touching the net in striking, while others wished to limit the possibility of volleying at the net by the addition of a volleying line within which the player was not to stand, while others even desired to prohibit the practice altogether. These remedies were objected to, as adding to the burden of the already overweighted umpire; but this argument was overruled, and so far as finality in such a matter can be predicated, the question has been finally disposed of by a rule forbidding a player to volley a ball before it has passed the net. The point has been so far important in the history of the game that it gave rise to the first suggestion that an association of lawn tennis clubs, consisting of 50 members or upwards, should be convened specially to prohibit the practice. Hitherto, as we have seen, there had been hardly any open tournaments, but the success of the two All England meetings had paved the way for others, and early in the year 1879 it was announced that the Oxford University Lawn-Tennis Club had instituted a four-handed championship, and had offered a cup, the competition for which took place in May, when the trophy was won by Messrs. L. R. Erskine and H. F. Lawford. In this year also was inaugurated the championship of Ireland, played in Dublin, and repeated with ever-increasing prestige in each successive year to the present time. The prize was won by Mr. V. Goold, at that time better known by the name of 'St. Leger,' under which he played; and the meeting was further remarkable as being the first occasion on which ladies competed for a championship, which on this occasion was secured by Miss M. Langrishe, whose name occurs frequently in lawn-tennis annals.

A proof of the increasing popularity of the game, as well as

of the general belief that the possibility of success was not at that time limited, as is now the case, to three or four well-known players, is furnished by the fact that there were forty-five competitors for the All England Championship of 1879, of whom only nine had taken part in previous contests at Wimbledon. Mr. P. F. Hadow, the holder, being in Ceylon, could not defend his title; but the list in addition to Messrs. Erskine and Lawford, the second and third prize winners of the preceding year, included Messrs. W. Renshaw, E. Renshaw, A. J. Mulholland, O. E. Woodhouse, E. Lubbock, C. F. Parr, V. Goold, the Irish champion, C. D. Barry, who had taken second honours at Dublin, and J. T. Hartley, of whom the last, though quite unknown at Wimbledon, came up from Yorkshire with a great reputation. Of these, the two Renshaws were prevented from putting in an appearance, but the absence of two young men of eighteen years of age was hardly noticed at the time amid the host of competitors, and no forecast could at that time be made of their coming greatness. At the end of the six rounds made necessary by the large number of entries, Mr. J. T. Hartley emerged the winner, like his predecessors an old Harrovian, but unlike them a tennis player who had represented Oxford in 1870. His closest struggle was in the second round against Mr. L. R. Erskine, but the practice he obtained in his earlier matches was of the highest value to him, and when on the final day he met and vanquished Mr. V. Goold, he was undoubtedly a much stronger player than he had been on the occasion of his first match on the All England ground a week before. The result of the play was summed up by a writer in a daily paper: 'Safety is the first requisite in lawn tennis, and brilliancy the second,' and this remark, from which as a general proposition large deductions should be made, was certainly true of the tournament of 1879. The showy and more attractive style of Mr. Goold, with all its brilliancy, could achieve no success against the unfailing judgment which was the most conspicuous characteristic of Mr. Hartley's game. The French proverb, 'La balle cherche le

bon joueur,' might indeed be applied to the lawn-tennis champion of 1879. It was not so much he who went after the ball as the ball that went after him. The accuracy of his return, too, was equal to that of his judgment, and though tested by modern standards he might not be classed as a hard hitter, he nevertheless made the ball travel at a good pace. Seldom volleying himself, he would repeatedly defeat the tactics of a volleyer by passing him in the most dexterous manner. In short, he was more accurate than hard hitters, and hit harder than the accurate players of his day, and this combination of qualities secured for him a victory which was as popular as it was unexpected. Mr. V. Goold took the second and Mr. Parr the third prize. It may have been owing to accidental circumstances or to the prevailing type of play, that service in this tournament more than maintained its old supremacy, the analysis showing that, with the service-line unaltered and excluding hollow matches and those played on one day when the wind was excessive, service won 352 games and lost 295, a proportion of about eleven to nine, while the strokes won by the server were to those won by the striker-out in the proportion of twenty-four to twenty-three. Among many curious suggestions made about this time for doing away with the anomalies inseparable from the existing method of scoring, one is sufficiently remarkable to deserve notice. It was proposed that lawn tennis should be scored as whist is marked: that a love game should be represented by a treble or three points, a game in which the loser scored fifteen or thirty should constitute a double or two points, and that when deuce or advantage should have been reached, the winner should score a single or one point. The set was to consist of twenty points, and the match would be decided by the aggregate of points instead of by an aggregate of sets. It is hardly necessary to add that this ingenious scheme met with little support, but its leading principle of scoring by points has since been not unfrequently suggested, and it would be rash to affirm that in some form it may not be again revived. One more open

tournament was played in this year which may be mentioned as first introducing the Messrs. Renshaw to public notice. It was played at Cheltenham in October, partly out of doors on asphalte and partly in a covered court, and was won by Mr. W. Renshaw, who defeated Mr. V. Goold. The estimate formed of the winner by the reporter of this match has been amply justified—'With more experience he will give trouble to the best players in the kingdom. He is most active in the court, and seldom misses a return; but,' the chronicler adds, 'his stroke is not severe.' In this respect only the statement will at the present day appear to require modification.

Before the close of 1879 Mr. J. Walsh, who as Honorary Secretary of the All England Club had been indefatigable in the cause of lawn tennis and had rendered to the game services of the highest value, resigned his office, which was shortly afterwards filled by the appointment of Mr. J. Marshall. This gentleman sustained the difficult burden of management with conspicuous success for nearly nine eventful years, during which the history of the legislation of lawn tennis may be said to have been virtually the history of the club which he served, and he retained office until the spring of 1888, when the All England Club was about to resign into the hands of a Central Association the initiative which it had exercised from the commencement of the game, and to transfer the legislative functions of the club to a wider and more representative body. Those who were most closely associated with Mr. Marshall in his arduous labours, if on the one hand they may be in some measure biassed by partiality, will yet be best able to appreciate his untiring energy and great services in the cause of the game in the promotion of which he took so large a part.

The lawn-tennis season of 1880 was heralded by the institution of the Northern Lawn-Tennis Association, and preceded by a revision of the laws by the Marylebone and All England Clubs. The code as then issued was substantially that in use at the present day, with two exceptions, viz., that the height of the net at the posts was fixed at 4 ft., a height which has

since been further reduced to 3 ft. 6 in., and the server, though compelled to deliver the service as now with one foot beyond (further from the net than) the base-line, was allowed an option of having the other foot either within or upon it. He is now compelled to serve with one foot upon, and the other behind, the base-line. Additions to and explanations of the laws of 1880 have indeed been at various times inserted, but without making any vital alteration, and with the two exceptions above named the laws of 1890 are in substance the laws of 1880. By this revision the service-line was brought in to a distance from the net of 21 ft., the limits of variation in the size and weight of the balls was fixed, a service not delivered in accordance with the laws was declared a fault, a service touching the net if otherwise good was declared to count for nothing, the player was forbidden under penalty of losing the stroke to touch the net or to volley the ball before it had passed the net, and on application by either party before tossing for choice, the umpire might direct the players to change sides after each game.[1] Such were the principal novelties in the single game ; but in the four-handed game a very important change was effected by the introduction of service side-lines, by which the strength of service was materially reduced. In the ensuing month of May, on the occasion of the four-handed championship held as in the preceding year at Oxford, 'coming events' began 'to cast their shadows before' when Messrs. W. and E. Renshaw by beating in succession Messrs. A. J. and H. L. Mulholland, Messrs. R. W. Braddell and J. Comber, and Messrs. C. J. Cole and O. E. Woodhouse proved themselves for the first, but by no means for the last, time the best pair in England. Their service is described as not having been 'at any time very severe,' but their volleying is considered to deserve especial praise, and it is evident from the report that they had by this time developed to a high degree of perfection what was afterwards called the 'Renshaw smash.' A few days later Mr. W. Renshaw carried

[1] The change of sides is now (1890) to be made at the end of the first, third, and every subsequent alternate game of the set.

off the Irish championship played in Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, defeating successively Messrs. R. T. Richardson, H. F. Lawford, M. G. McNamara, E. de S. Browne, and V. Goold the champion of the preceding year—no small achievement, considering that the winner was only nineteen years of age, and that his opponents were among the strongest players in England or Ireland. He was, however, unable to repeat his success in the championship match at Prince's Club, when, owing possibly to the slippery state of the ground, he was beaten by Mr. Lawford. Messrs. E. Lubbock, E. Renshaw, R. T. Richardson (who shortly afterwards won the Northern Association Championship), and O. E. Woodhouse also played in this tournament, and the final match in which Mr. Lawford beat Mr. Lubbock was rendered remarkable by the longest rest recorded in a first-class match, extending to eighty-one strokes. There was no diminution in the number of competitors for the All England Championship. They amounted to sixty, and comprised most of the best known players of the day. Mr. Woodhouse, an unequal player, occasionally displaying great brilliancy, was seen at his best in his successive victories over the two Renshaws and the Hon. G. Montgomerie, but in the final match his weaker physique proved unable to cope with the indefatigable energy of Mr. Lawford. The latter was unable to wrest the championship from the grasp of Mr. Hartley, the holder, who won with apparent ease. In this match also, as at Prince's, the great length of the rests elicited an admiration not altogether unalloyed by weariness, one of thirty-three strokes, and four exceeding twenty-five, being recorded. Certainty of return indeed had been studied by the best players with an assiduity which tended to impair the popularity, and even to threaten the very existence, of lawn tennis. It is true that no apparent diminution of interest on the part of the public could as yet be discerned. The 200 spectators who had found their way to the lawns of Wimbledon to witness the championship match of 1877 had grown to 700 in 1878, and 1,100 in 1879, while 1,300 people are said to have witnessed

the triumph of Mr. Hartley in 1880. The execution of the performers was incontestably more perfect than it had been three years earlier, but the interest of the performance was imperilled by its very success. A new crisis had arisen in the history of the game. It had survived ridicule, it had surmounted obloquy. It had long raised itself above the level of agreeable amusement, and had become a national institution, but monotony is a danger with which no game can successfully cope. With all its merits it was still in the leading strings imposed by the traditions of tennis and rackets. Some originality indeed had been imparted to it by the versatile genius of Gore, the unerring judgment of Hartley, the unstudied grace of Goold; but in the hands of the majority of the most successful practitioners its highest achievement was a perfect but mechanical precision. In the growth and progress of this precision the earlier stages of the game found their object and their expression. How and by whose agency it asserted an individuality which it had not previously possessed: in what manner it shook itself free from the trammels of tennis and rackets, and entered seriously on the development of distinct principles and tactics of its own, forms a branch of our subject which requires, as it deserves, a separate treatment.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE REVOLUTION OF LAWN TENNIS

> The state of men
> Like to a little kingdom suffers then
> The nature of an insurrection.
>
> SHAKSPEARE, *Julius Cæsar*, Act ii. sc. 3

1881.—IN the history of games instances present themselves, though but rarely, of some fortunate individual who has been able by merit or accident to alter the course or give direction to the tendency of the pastime which he professes, and thus to link his name indissolubly with its annals. Such a man in cricket was David Harris, the bowler, who by the rapid rise and puzzling curl which he imparted to the ball enforced a more cautious style and a more upright bat, and contributed to the introduction by W. Fennex of forward play. Such men in billiards were Carr of Bath, who systematically applied, if he did not discover, the side-stroke, and Peall, who by showing the world how the spot-stroke could be indefinitely repeated brought about the elimination from first-class billiards of his favourite hazard. It is not necessarily the greatest player of his day who enjoys this supreme good fortune; and in all games names of the very highest eminence may be quoted whose possessors have never attained to it. Moreover, the longer an amusement has lasted, the more difficult does the task become, but when accomplished it is not so much a reform as a revolution. Such an event was at hand in 1881, though the men who were to lead it were almost entirely unknown. It is true that Messrs. William and Ernest Renshaw had enjoyed a foretaste of their coming triumphs at Oxford and

Dublin in the preceding year, and that they had then displayed much the same style as that which has since had so great an influence on the game; but the portent was watched by an unheeding world, and created no imitators. These were isolated victories, and at Prince's and Wimbledon success had rested with the exponents of the older style. It was possible that the new departure might prove only a broad way leading to destruction, the new and brilliant star might be but an ignis fatuus guiding into the dreary fens of disappointment, or the Serbonian bog of disaster. But the spring was not far advanced before the adherents of the old *régime* were compelled to bow to the logic of events. Mr. E. Renshaw scored the first family victory of the year against Mr. E. de S. Browne at Cheltenham in April, but the chief glories of the season were achieved by his brother Mr. W. Renshaw. The retention of the championship of Ireland, and the winning of Prince's and the All England Championships, made the year a triumphal progress for the young player of twenty, while in four-handed matches he was equally successful in combination with his brother, the pair winning the championship matches both at Oxford and Dublin. They had already, at least tentatively, discarded the old practice in accordance with which one player would assume a position at the base-line, while the other stood near the service-line, but apparently they were not, until much later, definitely convinced of the superiority of the new station, on or about the service-line—for we shall find Mr. W. Renshaw in a letter to the 'Field' dated May 26, 1883, advocating the old method. At this time they were, indeed, trying experiments, which they may sometimes have found dangerous, but whichever position they adopted they were almost invariably successful. Even in single matches they were at this time to some extent experimentalizing. They both indulged in the volley and in the smash to which they gave their name, to an extent frequently excessive and occasionally reckless, and their back play had not the severity which it has since acquired. Hence, even up to the last moment before the Wimbledon Meeting, it was thought

by some that Lawford's powerful back play, Richardson's combination of restrained strength in volley with admirable certainty from the back of the court, or Hartley's accuracy and judgment, would prove superior to the brilliant but sometimes erratic power of the young aspirant. The result showed that those were wrong who so thought. Lawford, indeed, made an excellent fight, and was beaten only by the odd set; but Richardson offered only a feeble resistance, and the match with Hartley, owing to the illness of the latter, was concluded in thirty-seven minutes, and from its unnatural decisiveness was an utterly inconclusive test of the merits of the two styles. No one who witnessed the match, however, could have failed to agree with the frank admission of the vanquished champion that the back-play of that date had had its day, and that victory *de jure* as well as *de facto* rested with the species of volley adopted by the winner. Everyone now knows the advantage of this method; everyone can see how much more of the net can be covered at the service-line than at the net, how much easier it is to run forward than back, how much less distance has to be traversed if it is necessary to retreat, and how a *locus pœnitentiæ* is left to the player who has come up prematurely to the service-line which is wanting to the player at the net; but little of all this was known in 1881, and the boldness and originality of the idea was no less remarkable than its sudden and startling success. The title of champion thus won in 1881 by Mr. W. Renshaw was retained by him until 1887, when he retired owing to an injury to his arm, now widely known as tennis elbow, of which the first public mention is found in the columns of the 'Field' in 1881. It is not impossible that Mr. Renshaw, by the increased severity both of service and smash introduced by him at this time, and at once imitated by a host of players, may have contributed to the vastly increased prevalence of the injury which has since, though fortunately only for a time, taken its revenge upon himself. Tennis elbow has generally been attributed to the great and sudden strain thrown upon the muscles of the arm

by the overhand service; and though this service was not absolutely the creation of 1881, it was now delivered with vastly increased severity.

An interesting handicap was played at Prince's in June, in which Mr. E. Renshaw received alike from his brother and from Mr. Lawford the odds of two bisques, and just won both matches, so that the difference between the three players cannot have been great. In this match, the turf being wet, Mr. Lawford wore shoes with small leather protuberances to prevent him from slipping. To this the management objected, and the immediate result of their decision may have been the loss of the match. Among the ulterior consequences was the introduction of steel points, now universally worn in wet weather. In the same month the first matches took place between Oxford and Cambridge, the former being successful both in the singles and the four-handed matches. Two other tournaments may be mentioned, not as remarkable in themselves, but as showing the wide diffusion of the game. The first took place at Durban in Natal, the other at a height of 6,000 ft. above the sea, on or near the top of Mount Troodos or Olympus in Cyprus, then the summer quarters of the British troops. A spirited attempt was also made to play the game by electric light at Cheltenham in December; an attempt which has since been repeated, but without much success. On this occasion the Brush system was adopted, and the experiment was so far satisfactory that the result was not a matter of mere chance, and the match was won by the best player, Mr. W. Renshaw, with Miss Bradley as his partner. No ladies' championship had as yet been instituted at Wimbledon, nor was any such match played in this year at Dublin, but Miss G. R. Gibbs at Bath, Miss Bradley at Cheltenham, Miss Cole at Exmouth, and Miss M. Watson at Edgbaston, respectively evinced their superiority to their rivals.

Among the débutants of the year were Mr. E. L. Williams, then only fifteen years of age, Mr. C. W. Grinstead, and Mr. H. Grove, each of whom has since had a distinguished career.

These three gentlemen, as well as a number of eminent players who will be mentioned hereafter, formed their style and mode of attack upon that of the Renshaws. A standard of play had thus been introduced to which nearly every promising beginner conformed; a school had been formed in which every tiro enrolled himself as a disciple, and it is this circumstance, even more than the brilliancy of the play, which makes the year 1881 an epoch in lawn tennis.

1882.—As has happened in revolutions of a still more important character, the negation of established principles and the removal of old landmarks were succeeded by a reign of terror. Players and public alike, inspired by the success and universality of the volley, had indeed revolted against interminable rests consisting entirely of strokes from the back of the court; but they were not less strenuously opposed to the introduction of a game which should differ from battledore and shuttlecock principally in the shortness of the struggle. Was lawn tennis to be reduced to the interchange of three or four sharp repartees from the service-line, followed by a smash from the vicinity of the net? One player, and one alone, of first-class position, had hitherto resisted the contagion of the volley. Mr. Lawford had played consistently and with ability from the back of the court, but he had been beaten; and it seemed certain that under the existing conditions the volley must be taken to have a definite and constant superiority. The Marylebone and All England Clubs resolved, therefore, on May 12, 1882, to meet the difficulty by lowering the net at the posts from 4 ft. to 3 ft. 6 in. It was a small modification, and both the principle of the change and the time for effecting it were warmly impugned. Time and experience have amply vindicated the wisdom of the decision. Its first results were seen in the four-handed game in a temporary but decided check to the service-line position. Messrs. W. and E. Renshaw failed to retain the championship of Ireland at Dublin, and that of England at Oxford. In the former they were defeated by Messrs. E. de S. Browne and P. Aungier, and in the latter by Messrs. Hartley and Richardson.

On both occasions the winners adhered to the older method, where the back player would find his position strengthened by the increased facility of playing down the side-lines in consequence of the change in the law, the skill in this respect of Mr. Hartley, who in the Oxford match took the back play exclusively, being especially noted in the contemporary reports. A second result of equal importance was soon observable. At the championship meeting at Wimbledon, in the match between Messrs. E. Renshaw and Lawford, the server won seventeen games only, while the striker-out secured twenty-six, and when Mr. E. Renshaw met Mr. Richardson the striker-out won twenty-three games to fourteen won by the server. It is obvious that with the lower net, service, however fast, could be returned at greater speed and with more accuracy along the side-lines; and thus, though severer than ever, it had lost its ascendency. The new law did not, however, materially affect results in the single game. The twin brothers were as successful in this as they had been in the preceding year. Mr. E. Renshaw, after defeating all his opponents at Dublin, declined to challenge his brother for the championship, and at Wimbledon the same two players were left to compete for the premiership of lawn tennis, and the holder, though not without a severe struggle, retained his position. Next to these the most successful players of the year were Mr. R. T. Richardson and Mr. E. de S. Browne, both in the main volleyers, and Mr. Lawford, who still restricted himself chiefly to back play, and under the altered conditions had perhaps not had time to bring to perfection his most formidable attack from base-line to base-line along the sides of the court. Oxford again beat Cambridge in both the annual lawn-tennis events, a result which might have been expected from the fact that Messrs. Grinstead, H. Grove, J. G. Horn, and C. B. Russell were included in the winning teams. Mr. E. L. Williams created a sensation by beating Mr. E. de S. Browne at the Agricultural Hall, and names new to lawn tennis are recorded in Messrs. Donald Stewart, H. W. Wilberforce, and E. W. Lewis, who for the first time obtained success destined

to be often repeated. Of the ladies, Miss Abercromby at Dublin, Miss F. Morris at Bath, and Miss M. Langrishe at the Northern meeting were eminently successful.

1883.—For some time past a feeling had been growing in favour of a more direct representation of lawn-tennis players in general in matters connected with the game. It had been fostered by the diffusion of first-class play in the provinces, by the vast increase in the number of clubs, and the improvement of the standard of play. Accordingly, early in 1883, a meeting to discuss the formation of a Lawn-Tennis Association was held in London, but the result was inconclusive. A proposal was made and carried that a conference should be held with the All England Club on the subject. That club, in declining the conference, offered to institute an annual meeting of secretaries of clubs with power to arrange fixtures and to discuss matters affecting the game; and a second meeting for the discussion of the question of association negatived the project by a very small majority. The offer of the All England Club was then accepted, and thenceforth until 1888 a meeting of lawn-tennis representatives was annually held under the presidency of the secretary of the All England Club.

Meanwhile the reaction against the volleyer continued. The assistance of legislation was invoked. The offender was to be abolished altogether, or at least to be ostracized from the vicinity of the net, and fears were expressed that 'if the present system were kept up lawn tennis would fall more and more into the hands of a few first-class players.' In short, the saviour of society of two years before had become the enemy of the human race. Still, in spite of denunciation, he pursued his course. He did more: he threatened a further advance a more exclusive superiority. We find Mr. Renshaw predicting that 'before many years taking the ball off the ground will be quite the exception; and in its place there will be far finer and more exciting rallies in the volley than have ever been up to the present.' On the other hand, Mr. Lawford writes that 'perfect back play will beat perfect volleying. It is always

possible to pass a volleyer with the court as it is at present; and I know that when I lose a stroke by being volleyed it is my own fault.'[1] And again, 'When a fine volley finishes the rally it is as it should be—a weak stroke paying its proper penalty.'[2] In other words, the answer to the man at the net is, Learn to play better. Thus spoke the two greatest exponents of the competing schools. Mr. Renshaw was the finer player of the two, but in logic or prophecy he was inferior to his rival. He had omitted or underrated the limitations imposed by nature on human strength. Volleying from the service-line is more exhausting than back-play, and the champion himself has been alike in practice and theory compelled to submit to the laws of nature. But Mr. Lawford, while advocating in print and enforcing in practice the paramount necessity of strong and accurate back-play, had by this time convinced himself that Mr. Hartley was right when he said that 'a combination of both styles will always be needed.' About this time he adopted in part the tactics of his chief opponents. 'He hit as hard as ever to the base-line, but he now followed his stroke close up to the net, and volleyed the return hard across the court.'[3] His long and persistent advocacy in theory and practice of base-line playing received its due reward. He had learned something from the volleyers, but they in turn were forced to resort to his tactics.

A practical equilibrium between the two methods was attained. Since then the volleying has been as brilliant and unexpected as ever, but it has been not the basis but the result of strategy. The hitting has been harder and more accurate, but it has not been the final end and object of the striker. Each kind of stroke has fallen into its proper place, and the controversy has ceased with the occasion which called it into being. The credit of this desirable consummation should be attributed, as it is due, equally to the Renshaws on the one hand and to Mr. Lawford on the other. In the four-handed game there was

[1] *Lawn Tennis*, by W. Methven Brownlee, p. 30.
[2] *Field*, June 16, 1883.
[3] *Lawn Tennis*, by W. M. Brownlee, p. 31.

much more agreement in principle. Mr. W. Renshaw announced, in a letter to the 'Field,' his adhesion to the older division of labour. He says, 'the winning game is for one man to stand about the base-line, the other on or just inside the service-line.'[1] And Mr. Lawford expressed himself to the same effect. This position has now become practically obsolete, and the abandonment of the service-line position in the double game was, on the part of the Renshaws, only temporary; but both writers agreed in effect that 'play must be very weak to allow a player at the net to do much good.' Acting on these principles the old struggle was renewed. The Irish championship was won by Mr. E. Renshaw, after a finely contested match with Mr. Lawford, in which both games and strokes were almost exactly equal. The same player, in conjunction with his brother, secured also the double championship, and the pair were again successful in the Northern Association tournament, against Messrs. Hartley and Richardson.

The championship meeting at Wimbledon was a remarkable one. The two strongest players, Messrs. E. Renshaw and Lawford, met in the first round, and the vicissitudes of the match made it one of the most extraordinary contests on record. Mr. Renshaw, playing against a violent wind, had a strong lead in the first set, winning five games to one. Mr. Lawford then won five games in succession and the set. On crossing over, Mr. Lawford only won one game in the second set. In the third, after three games scored to Mr. Renshaw, his opponent won a love set. The fourth was a love set to Mr. Renshaw, after Mr. Lawford had won two games. Changes so sudden and victories so hollow would in any case have made the match memorable, but the end was more singular still. In the fifth set Mr. Lawford won five consecutive games. Then Mr. Renshaw in despair tried an underhand twisting service, which, aided by the strong cross wind, drove his antagonist far out of the court. Instead of taking this, as he should have done, back-handed, Mr. Lawford tried to crush it fore-handed, and

[1] *Field*, May 26, 1883.

he failed—hitting many balls out of court. Aided by fine but somewhat fortunate play, Mr. Renshaw crept up game by game, and finally won the set and the match. He afterwards defeated Messrs. C. W. Grinstead and Donald Stewart, but failed to wrest the championship from his brother.

As illustrating the relative frequency of the volley at this time, it is interesting to find that in the Renshaw-Lawford match, out of an aggregate of 626 strokes, not including service and return, 502 were taken off the ground, while 124 were volleys, of which Renshaw contributed 97 and Lawford 27; from which it would appear either that the frequency of the volley had been exaggerated, or, as is more likely, that hard hitting and improved placing had already begun to produce their natural effect. In this year the United States of America, for the first time, sent over two representatives, Messrs. C. M. and J. S. Clark, two brothers who, though not claiming to be a representative or champion pair, had not been beaten as a pair in their own country. They played two exhibition matches at Wimbledon against the Renshaws, who were, however, far too strong for them. It was remarked that the up-player stood much too near to the net, and was consequently at a disadvantage. Next to the performances which have been mentioned, the principal features of the year were the extraordinary successes of Mr. C. W. Grinstead and of Miss M. Watson, to whom Miss M. Langrishe was but slightly inferior, and the first appearance of Miss L. Dod, whose triumphant career will necessitate frequent mention hereafter. Mr. Grinstead, in addition to numerous other trophies, was successful at Leicester, Leamington, Exmouth, and Brighton, besides beating Mr. Richardson at Wimbledon; while in a match at Edgbaston he only allowed his opponent to win a single stroke in a whole set, probably the most decisive victory on record.

The attempt to play by electric light was renewed at Mr. Borrie Blair's Court near Stockton, one of Dr. Siemens's arc-lights, 3,000 candle power, being used. In reference to this attempt, the late Mr. O. E. Woodhouse, equally distinguished

as a lawn-tennis player and electrician, recommended the use of three lights, a large one over the net, covered over, and reflected on a white screen to imitate a ceiling, and also one at each end reflected in a similar manner. It is not known whether the experiment has since been tried; but, should it be repeated, the above suggestion might with advantage be acted upon.

A remarkable innovation on the old method of pairing the competitors in a tournament was also first suggested in this year by Mr. R. B. Bagnall Wild. The object was to place all byes in the first round, so that no competitor should sit idle while another is playing a hard match. This was secured by taking the power of two next above the number of entries and deducting from it the number of entries. The difference would be the number of byes in the first round, e.g. with 9 entries, $16-9=7$ byes and 1 match; so, with 21 entries, $32-21=11$ byes and 5 matches, in each case bringing the players in the second round to a power of 2. This system has in principle been universally adopted, and will be again referred to; but it is impossible to pass over altogether an invention so ingenious, the consequences of which have been so remarkable. Such an innovation required time and consideration before it could be generally accepted, and the principal matches of 1884 were arranged on the old system.

1884.—The Irish championship was as usual the first in precedence, as it is with one exception in prestige. Mr. E. Chatterton, who in the previous year had made a very successful first appearance, was beaten in the final round by Mr. Lawford; and the latter had not much difficulty in wresting the championship from Mr. E. Renshaw, the holder, who had prejudiced his chance of success by dancing into the small hours of the day of the match. Lawn tennis is an exacting mistress and will not brook dalliance with the attractions of Terpsichore. Mr. Lawford's game is said to have been of unsurpassed severity, but it should be remembered that it is easy to play a strong game against a tired opponent. In fact, however, he had strengthened his attack since he last met his rival, as was

shown at Wimbledon, where Mr. E. Renshaw succumbed to Mr. Grinstead, who in his turn was unable to do more than win a single set against Mr. Lawford. The champion was, however, still too strong for Mr. Lawford, who, moreover, was to some extent weakened by an injury to his wrist, and partly perhaps from this cause the play of the champion during the first and second sets was pronounced by many good judges to be the most brilliant which had yet been seen. To win a love set in 11 minutes against a player of Mr. Lawford's strength must, at all events, be considered an extraordinary performance, though perhaps too great a drain upon the reserve of physical strength, which, with a view to possible contingencies, the strongest player should always maintain. The interest of the Wimbledon meeting was increased this year by two novelties. A ladies' championship was instituted which, after a series of interesting matches, was won by Miss M. Watson, who, by this and her victory over Miss M. Langrishe at Dublin, proved herself to be decidedly the strongest lady player. A still more important feature was the transfer of the double championship from Oxford to Wimbledon. The entries for this event had recently dwindled in number and quality; and the Oxford University Club adopted a course not less wise than generous when they resolved to hand their cup over to the All England Club. Stronger entries and a wider interest have in each succeeding year rewarded the self-sacrifice of the donors. A curious instance of the difference between single and double play is afforded by the proportion of volleys to balls taken off the ground in the two respectively. In the single match between Lawford and Grinstead, a persistent volleyer, the volleys were 102, the strokes off the ground 479—a proportion of 1 to $4\frac{3}{4}$. In the final match of the double championship, between the Messrs. Renshaw and Messrs. E. Lewis and E. L. Williams, won easily by the former, the volleys were 314 and the strokes off the ground 156, a proportion almost exactly of 2 to 1. In extreme contrast to what may be called the condensation of first-class play, where, as between Lawford and Grinstead, there

were but one rest of 10 strokes, one of 9, and 2 of 8, may be mentioned a match at Eastbourne, lasting 2 hours 40 minutes, between Messrs. Coote and Avory, in which there was little or no volleying, and one rest extended to 60 strokes. In the second class the most successful players were Mr. Donald Stewart, who won the open singles at Cheltenham and the Northern championship, Mr. E. de S. Browne, the champion of the West of England at Bath, Mr. E. L. Williams with victories at Leamington and Eastbourne, and, above all, Mr. C. W. Grinstead, who, at Chiswick Park, Exmouth, Brighton and Wimbledon, showed that he had no superior except the three great players who in virtue of their superiority had consistently abstained from participation in local or provincial contests. Messrs. R. D. Sears and J. D. Dwight, now so well known in this country, represented America with success at Liverpool and elsewhere. Cambridge for the first time were able with the powerful assistance of Messrs. Wilberforce and Lyon to defeat Oxford, which this year had lost the services of Mr. Grinstead and depended mainly upon Mr. Grove. If the annals of lawn tennis tend to repeat themselves in successive years, one event of 1884 is hardly likely to be often repeated. At Stockton on July 5 a ball in play struck a sparrow very much in earnest and killed it on the spot. This was the last year in which the old system of byes was retained, for at its close the meeting of representatives recommended and the All England Club adopted, Mr. Bagnall Wild's scheme with trifling modifications, and thenceforward the absurdity and unfairness of a bye in the later rounds of an important match has been an impossibility. Two minor alterations in the laws were at the same time announced. The first owed its existence to the frequency of foot faults under the old law, and notably in the championship match, when the server was repeatedly penalized for lifting his foot in the act of serving, and the new law 7 now announced was as follows:—The server shall stand with one foot on the base-line, and the other behind it, no matter whether touching the ground or not.' The

law now (1889) reads thus: 'The server shall stand with one foot beyond (i.e. further from the net than) the base-line, and with the other foot upon the base-line.' And an explanation is added by law 9 excluding from the category of faults the lifting of the foot which is therefore now permitted. Law 17 was also altered so as to provide that 'it is a good return if the ball, having passed outside either post, drop on or within any of the lines which bound the court into which it is returned.'

1885.—The Hyde Park covered court in Dorchester Square, which took the place of the Maida Vale court when the lease of the latter expired, was opened in April 1885 on the occasion of the first Covered Court Championship. Neither of the Renshaws entered, and the title of champion was secured by Mr. Lawford, after beating Messrs. Donald Stewart, H. Chipp, and C. H. A. Ross. Another new championship dates from this year. It was instituted by the managers of the Buxton Tournament under the title of 'Ladies' double championship,' and has been repeated annually at the same place. The winners on the first occasion were Mrs. Watts and Miss Bracewell. The Irish championship was retained by Mr. Lawford after a very severe struggle with Mr. E. Renshaw. Equally interesting was the match between two younger players, Messrs. E. Chatterton and W. J. Hamilton, won by the former after an exciting contest. The brothers Renshaw in the doubles, and Miss M. Watson in the ladies' singles, were still superior to their rivals, though against the latter, Miss Martin, with powers of service and volley unusual in a lady, kept the result long in suspense. The All England championship attracted an unprecedented number of spectators. It is said that 3,500 persons witnessed the decisive match. Once more Mr. W. Renshaw vindicated his title, though with less to spare than in the preceding year. He won three sets to one, but the first and the last were both advantage sets. Mr. Lawford resorted to volleying rather more than usual, while Mr. Renshaw towards the close was playing mainly from the back of the court, and the result showed that his skill in this depart-

ment was as conspicuous as in that to which he owed his earlier fame. At a prior stage of the meeting a singular accident had aroused much controversy. A ball struck by Mr. E. de S. Browne, which would have dropped in court, came in contact with the foot of the umpire. A decision against the striker was confirmed by the referee on appeal, but the weight of authority failed to secure complete acquiescence. The obvious lesson to be learned from the incident was that the umpire's seat should have been further from the net. Miss M. Watson again proved herself the best lady player, and the Renshaws were still too strong for any other pair. After the three leaders Mr. E. de S. Browne was certainly the most successful player of the year. He placed to his credit the West of England championship at Bath, and the open singles at Cheltenham, and though defeated by Mr. E. Renshaw at Dublin and Wimbledon, two games only in the aggregate separate the winner from the loser. Of the rest Mr. C. H. A. Ross in the London Athletic Club tournament, Dr. Dwight in the Northern, Mr. Chatterton at Buxton, Mr. E. Lewis at Eastbourne, and Mr. Donald Stewart were the most successful, while among ladies Miss L. Dod was steadily working her way to the front. The lists were, however, weakened by the defection of two of the most promising players. Mr. Grinstead left England for Canada early in the year, and has been seen no more on our lawns, and the claims of business have allowed Mr. E. L. Williams to appear but rarely. Mr. Richardson, too, who had been at one time thought not incapable of the highest place, withdrew from first-class play in this year. But lawn-tennis players had to mourn a more melancholy loss in Mr. Donald Stewart, whose distinguished career was in the month of August closed by an early death, to the deep sorrow of a wide circle of friends.

1886.—The season opened in April with the Covered Courts championship, for which Mr. E. L. Williams put in one of his now rare appearances. Both he and his most formidable opponent Mr. Lawford (the holder) were short of practice, but the younger of the two, less affected perhaps by this cause, played

extremely well and scored a well-earned victory. The Irish championship was shorn of one of its chief attractions by the non-appearance of the Renshaws. Mr. W. J. Hamilton in their absence won the preliminary rounds, but was unable to wrest the championship from the holder, Mr. Lawford, who by a third consecutive victory secured the trophy in perpetuity. Miss M. Langrishe beat Miss Martin and won the ladies' prize. Cambridge for the third year in succession won both events in their annual contest, played this year at Hurlingham, against the sister university. At Wimbledon Mr. Lawford, as in the two previous years, vanquished all his opponents, including Messrs. Grove, Hamilton, Garvey and Lewis, and won the All Comers prize, but again, as on other occasions, his success stopped there. A crowd hardly less than in 1885 witnessed the struggle for the championship, and they were rewarded by what was, perhaps, the most brilliant performance ever known. Mr. Renshaw won the first, a love set, in 9½ minutes, hardly making a mistake, surpassing even himself in the rapidity and versatility of his game, and never giving his opponent a chance. He slackened slightly in the second set, which Mr. Lawford, taking advantage of the opportunity, won; but the result of the match was never in doubt, and after a marvellous display of placing, pace, and judgment against all Mr. Lawford's well-known powers seen at their best, Mr. Renshaw secured his sixth championship. Such play had never been seen before; it may be doubted whether it has since been equalled. Miss Bingley created some surprise by her victory obtained by sheer hard hitting and accuracy over Miss M. Watson, the champion of the preceding year; but the renewed triumph of the Renshaws in the four-handed match can have caused no astonishment, and was indeed inevitable. Mr. E. Renshaw occupied a somewhat less prominent position in this year than heretofore. He was beaten by Mr. Lewis at Wimbledon, and by Mr. H. Grove for the Northern championship, taking it may be less pains in preparation than some of his rivals. Messrs. Browne, Grove, and Dwight met each other frequently, and their alter-

nate victories and defeats gave to neither any decided superiority, while Messrs. Chatterton, Hamilton, and Lewis were little inferior either in merit or success. Among the ladies also a similar equality prevailed. Miss M. Langrishe and Miss Martin at Dublin and Buxton were entitled to equal honours. Miss M. Watson at Exmouth avenged her Wimbledon defeat at the hands of Miss Bingley, while Miss M. Watson and Miss L. Dod could each boast a victory. In effect there was little to choose between the first five ladies, or between the first eight gentlemen, always excepting Mr. W. Renshaw, who enjoyed an unquestioned supremacy. The revolution of lawn tennis was accomplished. Its end had been attained, but at this moment it must have appeared probable to many observers that the result had been the establishment of a perpetual dictatorship.

## CHAPTER V

### THE TRIUMVIRATE OF LAWN TENNIS

Is it fit,
The three-fold world divided, he should stand
One of the three to share it?
SHAKSPEARE, *Julius Cæsar*, Act iv. sc. 1

1887.—A GREAT future had for the last two or three seasons appeared to be reserved for Mr. Lewis, and the expectation of his friends was raised still higher by the easy manner in which, in the Covered Court Championship, he disposed of Mr. Williams, the holder. His prospects would have seemed even brighter, could anyone have foreseen the accidents of the immediate future. He was not, however, present at Dublin, and the appraisement of his chance for the championship was necessarily postponed. Mr. W. Renshaw was also an absentee, and the array of talent was perhaps less conspicuous than on other occasions. Mr. E. Renshaw had little difficulty in the All Comers singles, only losing one set—to Mr. W. J. Hamilton—in all his matches, and on meeting Mr. Lawford for the championship he won three consecutive sets, and thus recovered the trophy secured by him in 1883. The standard of play on both sides was very high, the first and third sets more than once depending on a single stroke; but Mr. Renshaw displayed a steadiness and caution sometimes lacking to his game, and to these qualities he owed his victory. An Irish pair, Messrs. W. J. Hamilton and T. S. Campion, won the four-handed championship for their country; but the most distinguished part in the tournament was taken by Miss L. Dod, who only lost one event for which she competed, and who, by succes-

sively defeating Miss Martin and Miss M. Watson, assumed the position, which she maintained throughout the year, of the best lady player. The Scottish Championship meeting, held early in June, was rendered important by the fact that Mr. W. Renshaw there sustained an injury to his arm, which ultimately compelled him to withdraw from all further participation in play for the year. This circumstance increased, if possible, the interest of the championship meeting at Wimbledon. If Mr. W. Renshaw should find himself unable to play, it was impossible with certainty to select the winner from a list comprising Messrs. Lawford, E. Renshaw, Grove, and E. Lewis. Finer play has rarely been seen than that between Renshaw and Lewis, though the former did not lose a set, and displayed to great advantage the same qualities of steadiness and caution which had so much assisted him at Dublin. Mr. Lawford was successful after a severe struggle against Mr. Grove, and as the champion withdrew from competition, the issue lay between Messrs. E. Renshaw and Lawford. The former seemed to have the better chance; not only had he behind him his victory at Dublin, but his play at this meeting had been distinctly superior to that of his rival, over whom he enjoyed the inestimable advantage of ten precious years of youth. Moreover, the older player had had the harder work in the week. All these considerations seemed to point to one result, but conclusive as they seemed, they were fallacious. The early stages of the match were unfavourable to Lawford. He had lost two sets to one and was beginning to tire, and good judges thought his chance hopeless. But Renshaw on this occasion allowed caution to degenerate into timidity, and steadiness into weakness. He allowed his opponent to recover his strength, and with it the fourth set. Then by the exercise of great determination, and of a physical effort which must have been of extreme severity, Lawford secured at last the coveted title of Champion of England. It was a great achievement. At the age of thirty-six to defeat, in a contest extending over two hours, an opponent ten years younger than himself would have

been sufficiently remarkable. But this was not all. Ten times had he entered at Wimbledon, five times he had unsuccessfully contested the championship. He had manfully withstood the prestige of the volley when it was deemed invincible; and singlehanded had maintained the value of back play. He had made converts of his chief opponents, and had in turn not disdained to borrow something from them. In each successive year he had learnt something and had gained something. Through disappointment and defeat he had found his way to victory, and he had his reward. It is rare in any department to find so signal an instance of patience and perseverance. The annals of games present no parallel to it.

In the absence of the Renshaws the doubles were won by the Hon. P. B. Lyon and Mr. H. W. Wilberforce, and Miss L. Dod vindicated her supremacy at Wimbledon as at Dublin, Manchester, and Bath. As in the previous year, it would be difficult to distinguish between Messrs. Grove, E. de S. Browne, Dwight, and Lewis, though the number of victories would perhaps award the palm to the latter, while an imperceptible interval only separated Mrs. Hillyard—hitherto well known as Miss Bingley—Miss Martin, and Miss M. Watson. The remarkable equality which had hitherto distinguished the matches between the rival Universities was still maintained, Oxford winning the singles, and Cambridge the double matches.

1888.—The idea of a Lawn-Tennis Association to embrace all the principal clubs in the country had been before the public for some years. It was not to be expected that the whole lawn-tennis world would for ever submit to the jurisdiction of a single club, however eminent; but though several abortive attempts had been made in the direction of association in previous years, it was only in 1888 that the idea was realized. Early in the year meetings were held, at which first a provisional and afterwards a definite scheme for constituting such an association were adopted. Rules were framed, the regulations for prize meetings were revised and amended, and an elective governing body was appointed. The council, elected annually, consists

of a president, twelve vice-presidents, an honorary secretary, an honorary treasurer, and thirty-six ordinary members. These latter represent six divisions of the United Kingdom, the southern counties returning ten representatives, the northern eight, the midlands six, while Wales and Monmouthshire send two, Scotland four, and Ireland six representatives. The All England Club frankly accepted the altered conditions, and, preceded or followed by all the leading clubs, joined the Association, and thereby gracefully abdicated the legislative functions which they had virtually exercised uncontrolled for eleven eventful years. It is too soon to anticipate the consequences of this democratic step, but a young and vigorous body, invested with unlimited power, could not long be expected to discharge merely administrative duties. The composition of the council, which includes nearly all the most prominent players of the day, is the best safeguard against rash and inconsiderate innovation.

Mr. E. W. Lewis retained with ease the Covered Court Championship, his assailants being in number and quality alike less formidable than might have been expected. The Irish championship produced a series of matches of the highest interest, the chief feature being the marked advance of Mr. W. J. Hamilton since last year. He beat in succession Messrs. Campion, Meers, Lewis, and Lawford, and was only vanquished by Mr. E. Renshaw, the holder, after a most exciting struggle. Mr. T. Pim appeared for the first time in this tournament, showing remarkable promise; and of the ladies, Mrs. Hillyard, after a very hard fight with Miss M. Langrishe, defeated Miss B. Steedman in the final match. The All England Championship at Wimbledon now seemed a very open question. If the matches at Dublin offered a fair criterion, there could be but little to choose between Messrs. E. Renshaw, Lewis, W. J. Hamilton, and Lawford; and in addition to these formidable claimants, Mr. W. Renshaw, the champion of so many years, was believed to have recovered from the effects of his accident. Unfortunately the weather, which interfered so fatally with the

tournaments of the year, was not more propitious to Wimbledon than to minor events. The commencement was necessarily postponed, and even after a delay of three days it was found that incessant rain had ruined the courts, and made the results to some extent a matter of chance. A long match on a heavy ground with Mr. Grove was not without its effect on Mr. W. Renshaw, and on the following day the latter had to submit to defeat at the hands of Mr. W. J. Hamilton, whose extraordinary power of rising superior to adverse circumstances was never more conspicuous than on the present occasion. On subsequent days both the weather and the ground improved, and though soft and devoid of life, the lawn was not altogether unfit for play. Mr. E. Renshaw on two successive days beat Messrs. Hamilton and Lewis, in neither case without a severe struggle, and by defeating Mr. Lawford, the holder, secured his first championship. The new champion had fairly earned his title; with the exception of his brother, he had himself met and vanquished all the best players in the list of entries, and though at no time was the ground in good condition, it must yet be remembered that in a variable climate the weather is not the least formidable of the antagonists with whom a player has to reckon, and taking the prevailing conditions into account, Mr. Renshaw played throughout a sound, and at times a brilliant game. The Messrs. Renshaw, playing through from the commencement, won the Four-handed Championship, and Miss L. Dod maintained against Mrs. Hillyard the position she had gained in the previous year. The meeting had taken place under new auspices. Mr. J. Marshall, who had so long been the hon. secretary of the All England Club, had resigned his office, and Mr. H. W. Wilberforce had assumed the burden of management. As might be imagined from their fine performances at Wimbledon, Messrs. Hamilton and Lewis swept the board at the minor meetings. Among the trophies of the former were the Northern and Welsh Championships at Liverpool and Penarth respectively, while Mr. Lewis careered from London to Leicester, from Chiswick Park to Exmouth, and

where he came he conquered. Mr. E. Renshaw displayed extraordinary skill in giving successfully the most crushing odds, and among other interesting specimens of his powers in this department he gave Miss L. Dod at Exmouth the odds of thirty, and at Penarth conceded to Mrs. Hillyard half-forty —tremendous odds considering the strength of the recipients— and he won upon each occasion.

Bad weather caused the abandonment of the Oxford and Cambridge matches, so that the balance still remained equal between the two Universities. All England Championships are necessarily limited in number. Absolute exhaustion of the supply had not, however, yet been reached, and the managers of the Northern Tournament embraced the opportunity. They instituted what is probably the last of the series under the title of 'All England mixed doubles championship,' which was won by Mr. E. Renshaw and Mrs. Hillyard.

1889.—The entries for the Covered Court Championship have never been as numerous as might have been expected from the interest of the contest. Commencing in 1885 with 9 competitors, it attracted a similar number in the next year, 10 in 1887, 6 only in 1888, while in the year under review 3 competitors only presented themselves. Mr. Lewis had no difficulty in retaining his title, but unless the interest in these matches can be revived, it may be feared that a competition, attractive in itself, and rendered more so by the fact that it is unique, is doomed to extinction. New covered courts having now been built and opened at the Queen's Club, Kensington, it is possible that this branch of the game may receive a new impulse.

Irishmen have the right to contemplate with entire satisfaction the result of the championship meeting at Dublin. Never since the year of its institution had they succeeded in retaining their own prize. But this was their hour of triumph. Mr. W. J. Hamilton defeated the Renshaws on two successive days, and at last, after ten years of eager expectation, an Irishman was once again champion of Ireland. His success was as well

deserved as it was popular, and gave promise of an even greater victory hereafter.

In the doubles the Messrs. Renshaw were forced to resign their position into the hands of Messrs. Lewis and Hillyard, and in the ladies' competitions Miss L. Martin, and her partner in the doubles, Miss Stannell, reaped the chief honours.

Twenty-four competitors entered for the All-England Championship. In the list were comprised almost all the most eminent players of the day. Two only were missing, and both were Irishmen. Messrs. H. S. Mahoney and J. Pim were unable to compete. The success of Mr. Hamilton at Dublin might well encourage his countrymen to hope that for once the tables might be turned, and that an Irishman might at last bring back from Wimbledon the coveted honour of which they had not had hopes so fair since the days of Mr. V. Goold. But their hopes were again disappointed. Their champion did indeed beat Mr. Lewis, but to the general surprise, Mr. H. S. Barlow, after a closely contested five-set match in which he seemed for a long time to be decidedly at a disadvantage, defeated Mr. Hamilton. The next day a still closer and more remarkable struggle took place between Messrs. W. Renshaw and Barlow. The latter won two sets and held an advantage in the third. Mr. Renshaw saved himself with difficulty, winning the set by the narrowest margin after his opponent had been within two strokes of the match. Again Mr. Barlow took a strong lead. The score was called five games to two in his favour, and he was four times within one stroke of victory, but his opponent again made a decisive effort, and though repeatedly in imminent danger ultimately won the set, after no less than eighteen games had been played. He had no sooner done so than he once more allowed his game to go to pieces, and Mr. Barlow won five consecutive games. Then at last the old champion woke up, and 'playing grandly, and winning game after game amidst tremendous excitement, brought the score to games all,'[1] and thus caused a fourth

[1] *Field*, July 13, 1889.

advantage set to be played. He then won the deciding set and the match. This year had produced many sensational matches, in the course of which fortune had repeatedly transferred from one side to the other her uncertain honours ; but in none of them had the turns been so sudden or the *dénouement* so tragic. It was certain, at all events, that Mr. Barlow had at a bound made good his claim to a position in the first class of players. Mr. W. Renshaw played far more steadily against his brother for the championship, and winning with comparative ease resumed the place he had held so long as the first of lawn-tennis players. Thus, just as in the first three years of the championship, it had passed from hand to hand, so now in these last three years the three greatest exponents of the game had each scored a victory.

The Renshaws avenged the defeat they had sustained at Dublin by winning the doubles against Messrs. Lewis and Hillyard, and in the absence of Miss L. Dod, Mrs. Hillyard once more occupied the position which she had held once before in 1886 as Miss Bingley. In the last set of the deciding match Miss L. Rice's score was at five games to three and 40—15, so that the interest of this match also was enhanced by an unexpected revulsion. Next to Messrs. Hamilton and Barlow must be classed Mr. Lewis, who at Chiswick, Exmouth, Teignmouth, and elsewhere, repeated his triumphal progress of last year. To Mr. Hamilton, however, must be awarded a nominal precedence, the Irish, Welsh, and Northern Championships having all fallen to his share. In the final match of a handicap at Howth he was called upon to owe 50, and in addition to give 15 and a bisque to a fairly good player. The score was several times called 40—owe 50, so that to have a chance of winning the game he had necessarily to win seven strokes running, a feat which he performed on more than one occasion, and eventually won the match. Among the ladies besides the winner of the championship, Miss L. Rice, Miss Jacks, the Misses Steedman, Miss Martin and Miss Stannell,

and Miss L. Dod have been highly successful; and the two Universities are still unable to claim any superiority one over the other, Oxford having won the single and Cambridge the double match. There remains to be recorded yet another interesting feature of the year. The Lawn-Tennis Association had instituted an inter-club challenge competition, for which they had framed a code of rules. England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland are divided into eight divisions, each division being subdivided by counties or other areas. The matches are to be played in three stages; the first between clubs in their respective subdivisions, until one club only be left in each. The winner of the first stage has then to compete with the winners in other subdivisions, until one club be left in each division. Finally, the eight winning clubs in the eight divisions contest with each other the third stage of the competition. The preliminary processes having been gone through, the last stage took place at the Queen's Club, when the All England Club defeated the Whitehouse L.-T. C. after a close contest. An inter-county competition had also been instituted under the same auspices. Middlesex and Surrey were left in to play the final matches, which took place at Exmouth, and the Middlesex team proved successful by the odd event only. An audacious innovation introduced at Scarborough may not be passed over in silence. Two competitions took place there entitled, respectively, Veteran Ladies' Singles, and Veteran Mixed Doubles. The courage of the handicappers deserves admiration no less than the candour of the competitors; and the love of lawn tennis must indeed be deeply implanted in the female breast, if the craving for odds can vanquish a reluctance which has been the despair of census enumerators, and which even in courts of justice the most solemn sanction has frequently been powerless to overcome.

The supreme legislative powers with which the Association was invested in 1888 have not long been allowed to remain in abeyance. In January 1890 important alterations of the laws were introduced. The change of sides, instead of being at the

end of each game is to be made at the 'end of the first, third, and every subsequent alternate game of the set,' and 'the winner of the toss may, if he prefer it, require the other player to make the first choice.' As a result the service will no longer come from the same side throughout the set, and the anomalous disadvantage of winning the toss ceases to exist. A more important change, which is, however, not compulsory, was made in the method of handicapping players. Bisques,[1] which had been borrowed from Tennis, are abolished, and instead of the alternating odds of half-fifteen, half-thirty, &c., which without the aid of bisques would be too widely separated from the next integral point of odds, smaller fractional parts—viz. one-quarter, two-quarters, and three-quarters of fifteen—are introduced, which may be given or owed in augmentation of other odds. One-quarter of fifteen is a stroke given at the beginning of the second, sixth, tenth, &c., games; two-quarters of fifteen is a stroke given in the second, fourth, sixth, &c., games; three-quarters of fifteen is a stroke given in the second, third, fourth and sixth, seventh and eighth games, and so on. The change was dictated mainly by hostility to bisques, which have never been popular with lawn-tennis players, partly because they do not possess a constant value, still more perhaps from the mental effort required to employ them discreetly. Yet it may be doubted whether the substitution of fifteen and two-quarters of fifteen for its equivalent of half-thirty will conduce to simplicity; and the already overburdened umpire will in the case of owed odds find that an additional demand is made upon his capacity for mental arithmetic, while a more serious defect, arising from the undue prolongation of matches in which heavy odds are owed, is left untouched. Nevertheless, it may be hoped that the difficulty will not be found insuperable, and that all lawn-tennis players will in the interest of

[1] The extinction of bisques leaves to them only an historical interest. When the meaning of the term shall have been forgotten, it will be useful that the antiquarian should be reminded that a bisque was one stroke which might be claimed at any time during a set.

uniformity loyally accept a change made by competent authority on weighty grounds and after due consideration.

Such is the history of lawn tennis and so great has been its progress. Its condition to-day is as flourishing as the warmest enthusiast could desire. No one can dispute the immense advance that has taken place in the average quality of the play. It is shown by the great increase in the number of players of the second and third class. In a large number of counties a local championship now exists, and the local champion is in almost every case a strong and often a brilliant player. The proficients of both sexes are counted by thousands where ten years ago they would have been limited to tens. But this is not all. Much as the average merit of the 'masses' has increased, that of the 'classes' may be said to have increased in an equal ratio. Three players at least must now be included in the first class in addition to those other three to whom a monopoly has so long been conceded. And the second class press closely on the heels of the first. To the list of those who have been so often mentioned in these pages that they do not need repetition, must be added a host of names so great indeed that many who with justice might be included must necessarily be omitted. Messrs. Goodbody, J. Baldwin, A. G. Ziffo, P. and G. E. Brown, G. W. Hillyard, H. Chipp, E. G. Meers, C. G. Eames, J. C. Kay, C. L. Sweet, T. S. Campion, and W. Baddeley: to all these and to many more a distinguished career is assured, or may be confidently predicted.

To attempt to anticipate the future would serve no useful purpose. There are many styles and many diversities of play. The method of the Renshaws is not that of Lawford, and Hamilton, Barlow, and Lewis differ equally from them and from each other. Whether the game of the future will be a development or modification of one of these styles, or whether some new departure is in store for us, is beyond our power to foretell; but the success of Major Wingfield's experiment is no longer a matter for conjecture or doubt. Poets and moralists have loved to trace the growth of great results from small beginnings, but

they might seek in vain for an illustration of an origin so humble, a progress so rapid, a development so vast. Not in this country only, but wherever the English tongue is spoken, lawn tennis has taken firm root. Boulogne, Brussels, Cannes, and Homburg are but specimens of the Continental towns which have fallen victims to the prevailing infatuation. Before 1881 it had overleaped the Atlantic, and from that date the championship of the United States has been an annual event. From Antigua and Melbourne, from Natal and Singapore, in India and China, in Pernambuco and Victoria, the results of matches are regularly reported. Nor is the extent of its diffusion more remarkable than the number and variety of its worshippers. Introduced avowedly as an amusement suitable to both sexes and to every age, it has more than fulfilled the expectations formed of it. Not only to the vigorous athlete, but to the child, the girl, the middle-aged man immersed in business, and to the man of grey hairs, it has served as a health-giving yet not too absorbing pastime. The favour with which it is regarded has apparently increased with every year. Pessimists may discover, to their own satisfaction, symptoms of a waning popularity, but these are imperceptible to unprejudiced observers. The germs of decay may lurk in it, as they do in the youngest and most vigorous forms of life, but they are as yet undeveloped, and at present it would be difficult to predict from what source is hereafter to come 'the change, the check, the fall,' unless, indeed, it arise among lawn-tennis players themselves from a conflict of irreconcilable claims, or from a disloyalty to the pursuit they profess. Lawn tennis is in danger neither from external attack nor from natural decay: its prospects are assured, if only it be true to itself. Not even in the case of cricket and football are the great matches watched by larger crowds with keener attention or a more intelligent appreciation. The names of the great players are 'familiar in our mouths as household words.' The distinguishing features of their play are known and understood by hundreds of persons who never take part themselves in the game. That the Wimbledon championship

has escaped the demoralizing influences which have turned the University and Public Schools cricket matches into vast undiscriminating picnics is a fortunate circumstance, both as inspiring hope for the future and as attesting the inherent vitality of the game. Few spectators attend from fashion or indolence; nearly every visitor to the ground is drawn thither by a living and personal interest; and what is true of Wimbledon is true of Dublin, Liverpool, Edinburgh, and countless other lawn-tennis centres, where the performances of 'the favourite' are watched with an excitement not less eager and far more disinterested than at Epsom or Newmarket. The annalist of lawn tennis, at least in this its hour of triumph may be permitted to give expression to a confident belief that the day is far distant when a future writer will be called upon to narrate the gradual stages of its Decline and Fall.

## CHAPTER VI

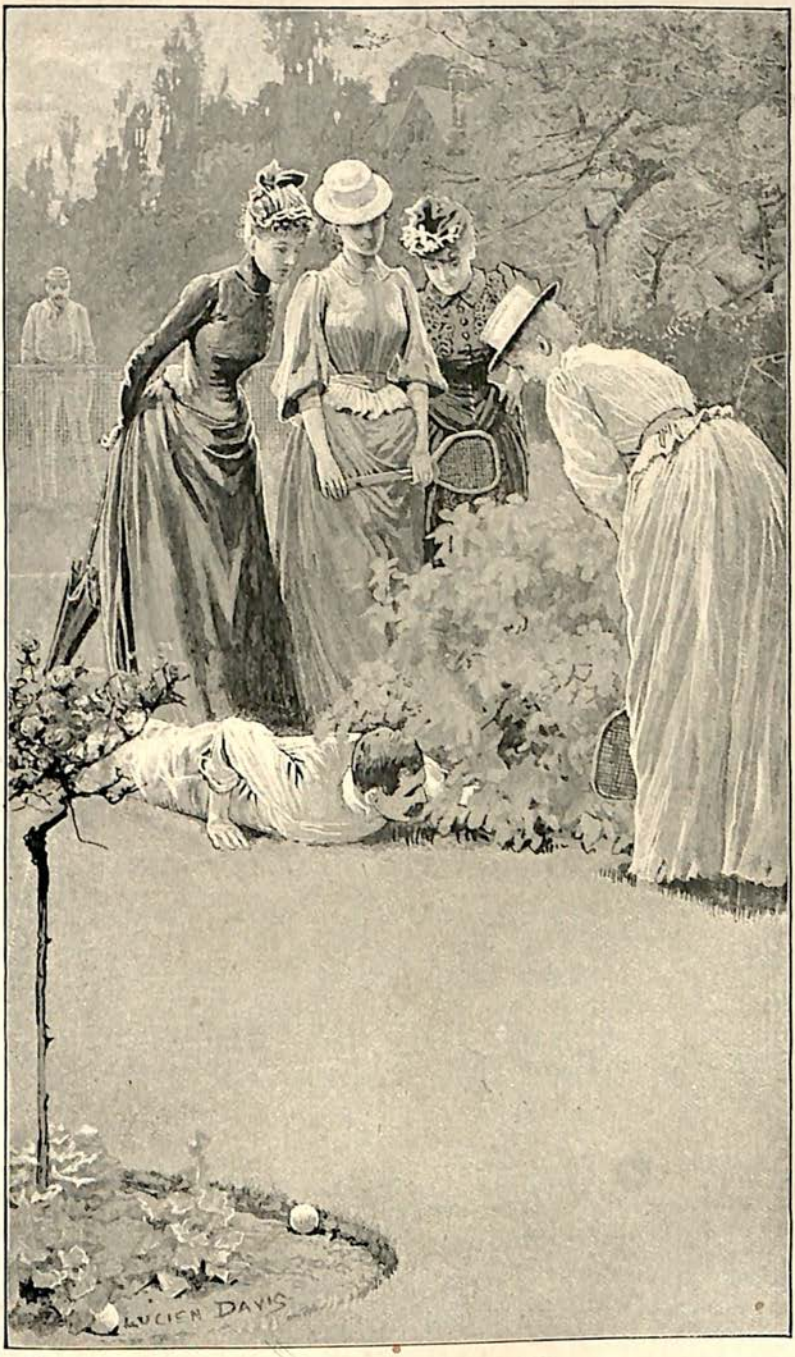
### THE COURT

Here is my space.
Kingdoms are clay.
SHAKSPEARE, *Ant. and Cl.* Act i. sc. 1

WERE a millionaire to advertise for a perfect lawn-tennis court, it is likely enough that he would be able to expend money up to any assigned limit, but it is not by any means certain that he would obtain what he desires; and any competent and fairly honest person to whom he might apply, even if given *carte blanche* as to expense, would probably decline the task. A perfect lawn-tennis ground is in truth a rare and precious possession. There are certain indispensable conditions which will not indeed secure a perfect ground, but without which not even a tolerable one can be produced; and these conditions, though in theory easily attainable, are precisely those which in practice are found most rarely to exist. In the first place, the lawn must be level. It must not be on a hill either in length or breadth, nor may it resemble a hog's back, sloping from the centre to the sides, or from the net to the base-lines. It must be of sufficient size to admit of an ample margin all round—that is to say, there must be a space of not less than 21 ft. from the base-lines, nor less than 12 ft. from the side-lines, to the limit of the ground. Yet it should not be unlimited: too vast an area makes it difficult to measure the strength of the stroke, and to see the ball satisfactorily. A background of shrubs is for the latter purpose the pleasantest to the eye, and this is generally possible on private lawns; but on club grounds a background of nets is in most cases the

best that can be hoped for. Where a background of shrubs exists these must be entirely subsidiary to lawn tennis, and no inherent beauty can be allowed to interfere with their single purpose. If a shrub in its natural growth encroaches on the prescribed space, were it the loveliest and most unique specimen in the kingdom, it must be removed or curtailed as ruthlessly as though it were the meanest plantain. No shrub or tree which can by any possibility cast a chequered shadow upon the court at any time of day can be allowed to exist, though a court entirely in deep shadow is pleasant enough. The ground must lie lengthways from north to south, otherwise 'the low sun lends the colour' in a sense which, however attractive to poet or painter, is destructive of good lawn tennis. From some perversity of nature or art, this condition, though of primary importance, is generally wanting, while many of the others are often wilfully ignored. The quality of the soil is rarely a matter of choice, but where possible it should be remembered that natural is better than artificial drainage.

Due consideration having been given to all these conditions, the selected ground must next be prepared for use. Where natural drainage does not exist the land must first be thoroughly drained by means of a three-inch main drain running along one side of the court, and two-inch spur drains discharging into the main drain at an angle so as to impede as little as possible the flow of the water. It is very important to do this some time before proceeding to sow or turf the surface, because the trenches cannot be filled in so firmly as to prevent the ground from sinking afterwards. The drains should not be covered in until they have been proved to discharge the water freely. The extent of the drainage will depend on the quality of the soil; but as it is far better to have a ground too dry than too wet, it is well to err at all events on the safe side. On heavy clay land the drains should be 30 in. deep, and not more than five yards apart, and even then the ground will probably be improved by the addition of a thin layer of chalk, fine rubbish, or cinders, placed on the clay below the surface




THE LOST BALL

soil. Lighter lands will not require this additional expense, and the number of the drains may be slightly reduced. The whole ground must next be carefully levelled. For this nothing is required but a number of wooden pegs, string, and a spirit-level, with the addition of a gardener who understands his business; but if the process of levelling requires soil to be brought from a distance, and the soil so brought is not all of the same kind, a layer of each kind should be placed over the whole plot, putting the retentive material at the bottom, and reserving the finer and more friable portions for the top. The necessity for this arises from the preference for certain soils shown by particular grasses. The added mould will very likely be full of weed seeds; it is therefore very advantageous to burn it, especially if it be of a clayey character. When the surface is perfectly level and absolutely smooth the top soil may be replaced, after which the rake and roller should be diligently used to secure a fine friable surface. At this stage in the preparation of the ground a cheap and easy method of providing sitting accommodation for a large number of spectators, available where the ground prior to levelling was on a slope, may be resorted to. It has been adopted by the Earl of Cavan, whose grass courts at Wheathampstead, Herts, may be said to approach very closely to perfection. The bank bounding the court is cut into the shape of an armchair with a sloping back. Such a bank will be naturally dry, and the damp can when necessary be effectually excluded by cushions or rugs. If the court is required to be used at an early date, and economy is not a special object, turf is to be recommended in preference to sown grass, and for this purpose down turf is the best of all possible kinds if it can be procured in the neighbourhood; but it must be remembered that, however closely the turves be laid down, they are apt to separate under a hot sun or drying wind, which will cause ugly seams to disfigure the entire surface, and for this reason in most cases, and especially if early use is not insisted on, sown grass is to be preferred. Before sowing the quality of the soil should be improved by a

free use either of well-rotted stable, farm, or artificial manure. Where the latter is preferred, 2 cwt. of superphosphate of lime, 1 cwt. of Peruvian guano, and 1 cwt. of bone-dust mixed together are recommended by Messrs. Sutton, than whom there can be no better authority on the subject, as an excellent dressing sufficient for an acre of ground. About ten days after the application of the dressing the seed-bed is ready for sowing. The best time for sowing is from the middle of March to the first week of May, and from the middle of August to the end of September, or even later. Seed may be sown liberally in autumn, and the process repeated in March, and the court may then not improbably be fit for a moderate amount of play in the following summer. In a favourable season the present writer has found this to be so, but such a result cannot always be counted on. It is of great importance not to stint the seed on the score of expense. The amount should never be less than 75 lbs. per acre, or 1 lb. to every two rods or perches of land, while a still more liberal expenditure of seed will be repaid by the more rapid clothing of the ground, and the more closely the plants are crowded the finer will be the herbage. The seed will be more evenly distributed by two sowings than by one, the second crossing the first at right angles. A still day should be chosen, and the sower should keep his hand low, as grass-seeds are very light and easily blown away. After sowing the entire surface should be raked in order to cover the seeds, and then rolled twice all over. The depredation of birds is most easily prevented by a number of lengths of twine with strips of glittering tin suspended at intervals so as to turn freely in the wind.

The description of seed to be used will depend on the nature and quality of the soil, and it will generally be wise on this head to consult one of the great seed merchants, such as Messrs. Sutton or Messrs. Carter, who have made it a subject of scientific experiment. For the present purpose it will be sufficient to indicate a few of the best grasses for ordinary soils

without specifying the proportions in which they should be mixed, a matter which will be better learned from an expert. Clovers should be avoided, as they do not wear well and hold the rain ; they should, therefore, be used only where the soil is peculiarly liable to be scorched in summer. The best grasses for lawn-tennis grounds are—crested dogstail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), sheep's fescue (*Festuca ovina*), hard fescue (*Festuca duriuscula*), fiorin (*Agrostis stolonifera*), several descriptions of meadow grass (*Poa pratensis*, *Poa trivialis*, and *Poa nemoralis semper-virens*). Crested dogstail is peculiarly adapted to dry loams or a chalky subsoil, sheep's fescue to a sandy or rocky soil, while the meadow grasses are better suittedo the stronger and moister qualities of land. The best mixtures will consist mainly of the above varieties, and should be obtained from some first-rate seedsman in preference to resorting to local dealers. The per-centage of germination of even the best seeds varies greatly, increasing from 60 or 65 per cent. in the case of fiorin to 90 or 95 per cent. in sheep's fescue, but from old seeds such as are frequently supplied by inferior dealers the percentage of germination is likely to be so small as to cause the labour and expense of sowing to be almost entirely wasted. Most of the best seedsmen give a guarantee both of purity of seed and of percentage of germination, by demanding which the purchaser will escape much of the risk of failure. He should, however, be careful to specify the purpose for which the seed is intended, many mixtures admirably suited to ordinary lawns being quite inappropriate for our purpose. In most old lawns clover will be found in large quantities, but as it will make the ground slow, the amount, if excessive, should be reduced by the appli-cation of nitrogenous manures. Rye grasses as a rule cannot be recommended, but perhaps an exception may be made in favour of a dwarf small-seeded variety of perennial rye grass, such as *Lolium perenne Suttoni*, which receives a high character as a quick-growing, close, fine, and hardy plant.

As soon as the young plant is high enough to be topped the scythe may be resorted to, as being at first better than the

mowing machine; but afterwards the latter should be constantly in use, never while grass is growing at all less than once a week, and in moist warm weather nearly every day, and at all events often enough to prevent the sward from ever looking ragged. Worms have a beneficial action on the soil which is good for the grasses; but during the summer worm-casts are a great annoyance, and on newly-sown lawns infested by worms they often prevent the germination of the seeds by loosening the soil to excess. Lime-water, which is perfectly innocuous to grass, if sprinkled over it, causes the worms to come to the surface, when they can be easily removed.

With every precaution annual weeds are sure to appear, and these can be held in check by constant mowing; but the more formidable weeds, plantains, thistles, and dandelions must be cut out with a knife one by one about an inch below the surface, care being taken to remove as much of the root as possible. A plantain cut off just below the collar will send out a number of shoots, and the process of extirpation must be repeated until by successive attacks the plants have been so weakened that the grasses can assert their superiority in the battle of life. This is naturally a slow and somewhat tedious process, and if a quicker result is desired, a drop of vitriol upon the cut root will if carefully administered have a speedier operation, attended, however, with the risk of causing bare places in the turf. Constant use of a court will keep down daisies, as they do not bear being trampled on; but on private lawns where there is not much play nitrogenous manure will assist the grasses to overcome the daisies. Where moss is prevalent it is caused either by dampness or by poverty of soil, and should be remedied by attention to the drainage or by the application of manure. When the turf becomes worn in particular places, a very small change in the court will relieve the pressure on the worn spot and enable the grass to grow again; at the end of the season all the patches should be re-sown, and a dressing of the artificial manure recommended above, or of about half a hundredweight of Norwegian fish guano, applied

to each court. Road scrapings are useful for the same purpose. Before re-sowing the ground should be vigorously raked, and a little fine earth should be sifted over the seed, and the whole rolled twice in different directions. Under no circumstances should the grass be allowed to seed, a course which only weakens the plant and does not materially thicken the growth. Where the soil is not so heavy that trampling will be injurious, it will be much improved by folding sheep on it for a month or two in autumn or winter. The sheep should be fed with a little oilcake in addition to hay or roots. This is generally done on club grounds, but is hardly possible where the lawn forms part of the garden. In such a case where play is suspended for a time owing to the absence of the family from home or any similar cause, it will be found useful to mow the grass constantly, leaving all the cut grass on the ground, and if this be done additional manure will in some cases hardly be necessary.

In conclusion, it must be repeated that a good ground is essential to good play. To make such a ground requires some amount of expense, and to maintain it will entail a good deal of trouble. The chief points to be firmly kept in view are constant mowing and rolling, change of the lines of the court as soon as it shows signs of wear, frequent examination to see that weeds shall never get the upper hand, and occasional restoration to the plant of those constituent elements which it requires as food. But the initial expense and the trouble of maintenance will be amply repaid by the drier and firmer surface, the absence of weeds, and the elimination of false bounds.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE IMPLEMENTS OF LAWN TENNIS

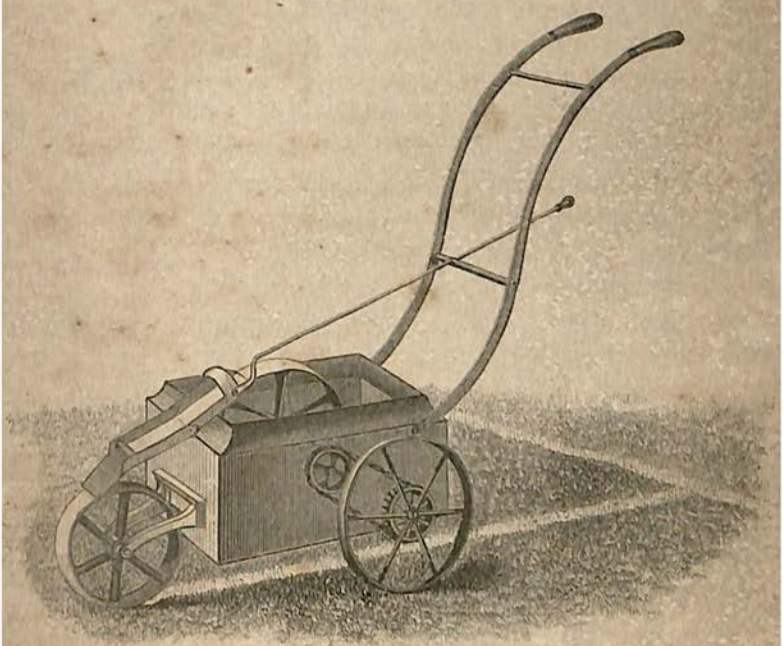
It is a low ebb with thee . . . when thou keepest not racket there.
SHAKSPEARE, 2 *Henry IV.* Act ii. sc. 2.

Why, these balls bound.
SHAKSPEARE, *All's Well*, Act ii. sc. 3

IT is hoped that readers who have taken the trouble to peruse the preceding chapter will now be prepared to make the large assumption that the ground has been levelled and turfed in the most approved manner, as well as manured if necessary, that all bare patches have been re-sown, that the grass has been most carefully mown throughout the early spring, and constantly rolled whenever the weather has made it possible or desirable, and finally that all weeds have been scrupulously eradicated. If the gardener has been induced to do all this, and has performed his duty conscientiously, the enthusiastic lawn-tennis players of the family will pronounce him an inestimable treasure, and will willingly condone any shortcoming in the produce of the vinery or the appearance of the flower garden. Even club grounds, where vineries do not exist and flower-beds are superfluous, will probably be found to require frequent visits and constant supervision on the part of the secretary, if he does not wish to be disappointed by the condition of the ground at the commencement of the season; but on private lawns the owner, or at least a member of his family, will on cross-examination be generally compelled to admit that much of the rolling and weeding at all events has been due to his own energy and perseverance.

If in a previous year he has not been satisfied with the

implements in use, he will have taken care to replace them during the winter with more serviceable articles ; otherwise the advent of May will find the manufacturer's time so fully occupied that it will be impossible without vexatious delay to obtain what is required in sufficient quantity or of the necessary quality. The first in order of use, though not in importance, of these implements is the lawn-tennis marker. Of these there



THE 'CAXTON' LAWN-TENNIS MARKER

are many varieties, all no doubt answering their purpose in a fairly satisfactory manner. The relative merit of these, as of all other implements noticed in this work, is a matter of opinion, which in order to be of any value should be based on experiment. Any higher authority than this the present writer does not wish to claim in reference to this or any other implement used in the game, but of the markers he has seen or

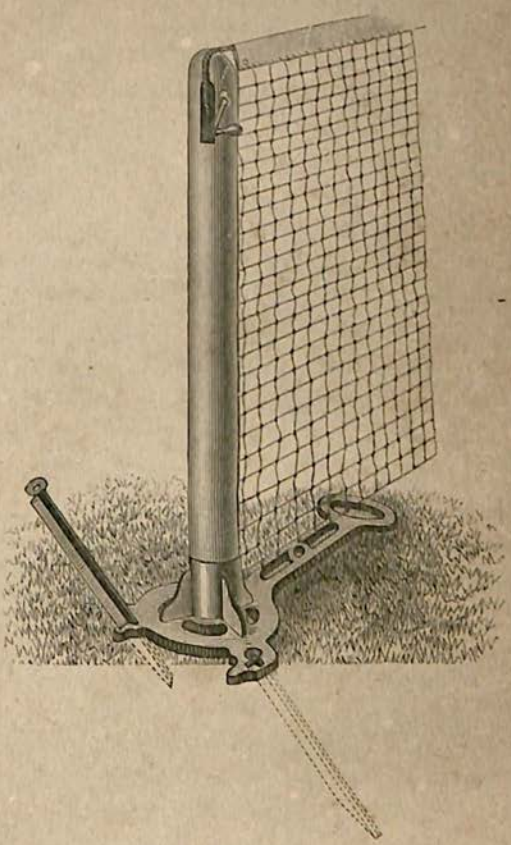
employed one of the most serviceable is the 'Caxton,' patented and sold by Mr. F. H. Ayres. It is in use at many of the principal clubs, is simple and does not easily get out of order, and moreover is not so addicted as some other varieties to the fatal vice of splashing. There are two qualities of the 'Caxton,' the best as usual being also the most expensive, and it is represented in the woodcut.

It is worked with a chain, which is more effective and trustworthy than the cog-wheels used in the cheaper pattern, and it is also furnished with a handle by which the shoot conveying the whiting to the marking-wheel is dropped on the tank-wheel. The shoot is represented in the engraving as in actual use. The marking-wheel is $1\frac{5}{8}$ in. in width, and the rim of the tank is turned over expressly to prevent splashing—a result which it is the more important to secure because some umpires and most players are apt to pronounce a ball in court if they have seen the whiting fly. Another excellent marker, even simpler in construction, is sold by Messrs. Slazenger & Sons, and is called by them the 'Waterfall.' The principle is that of the common water-wheel, raising the whiting to a platform, whence it is discharged upon a marking-wheel $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. in width; and the advantage claimed for this method is that grass, dirt, and other extraneous matters are completely excluded from the tank.

The best and easiest way to secure a rectangular court is to use a square, but this is not always procurable, and in its absence the following methods may be recommended.[1] For the four-handed court, having roughly ascertained its limits, fix the position of the net, and from the point immediately under it where one side-line is to be measure 39 ft. From the corresponding point where the other side-line is to be measure 53 ft. $0\frac{3}{4}$ in.: one angle of the court will be where these two lines intersect each other. Ascertain the other angles in a similar manner, and connect all the angles by means of the marker. Then measure 21 ft. on each side-line on both sides of the net, and 4 ft. 6 in. on the base-lines from

[1] See diagrams, App. II.

each corner of the court, put in pegs, and connect them with string. The points of intersection of the strings will be the angles of the service-courts, and the connection of these points of intersection will give the service-lines and service side-lines. Next bisect the service-lines and connect the points of bisection, and the double court will be complete. The single court may be marked in the same way, except that the diagonals from the net to the corners will be 47 ft. 5¼ in., and there are of course no service side-lines. Where the same area is intended to serve for the single and double courts, the service side-lines of the double court must be prolonged to the base-lines to form the side-lines of the single court.

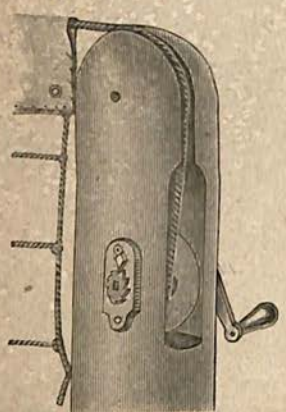


THE 'CAVENDISH' POST

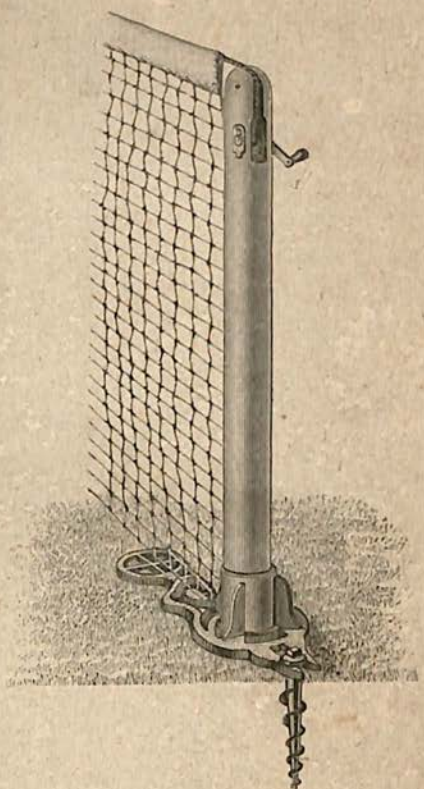
For the purpose of service the central point of the base-lines should be clearly indicated.[1]

[1] The Revised Laws (1890) retain the half-court line throughout the whole length of the court. The omission of the odds of half-court makes useless the prolongation of this line beyond the service-lines.

The court having been thus marked out, the posts next require consideration. The chief requisites of a good post are, first, that it shall keep its position in any ground in all weathers; and, secondly, that no portion of it, introduced either for ornament or as part of the mechanism, shall be allowed to project above the prescribed height of the net. This limitation absolutely excludes from consideration a large number of the posts which may still be seen in use. The handsomest and on the whole the best yet produced are the 'Cavendish' posts, and in ordinary soils these keep their position in a manner that leaves little to be desired. Each rests on an iron foot, which on the outer side is secured by two T iron spikes, or feather-pins, about 2 ft. long, which are driven into the ground up to the head at an angle of about 45°. The copper-wire rope supporting the net passes over the top, and is then attached to

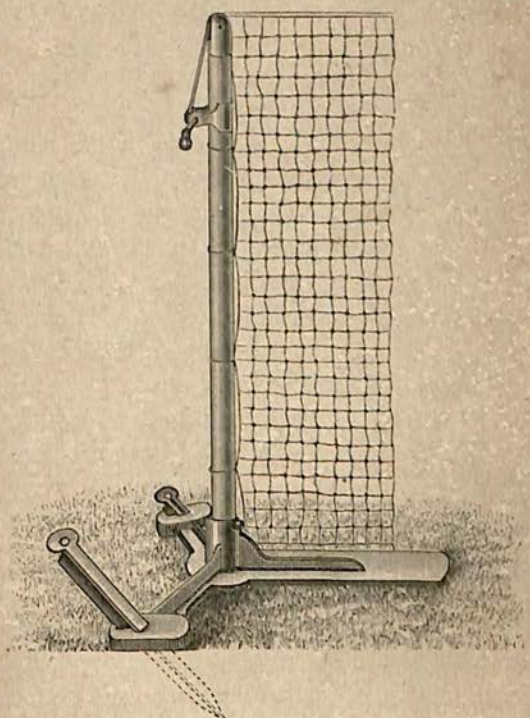


RATCHET OF 'CAVENDISH' POST



THE 'CHAMPIONSHIP' POST

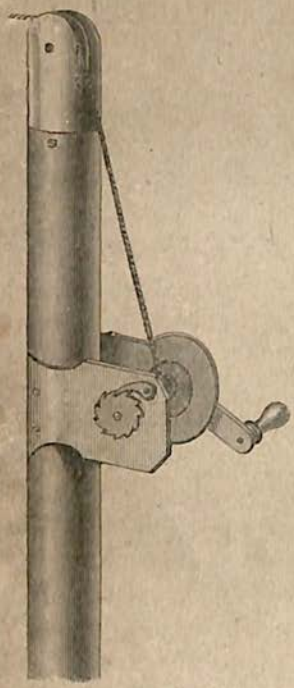
a wheel inserted in the post, easily worked by a handle at the side and checked by a ratchet. If the soil is very light, it may be necessary to increase the length of the T spikes, or in such case it may be better to adopt a different method of attachment, which is stated to be adequate to the task of keeping the post upright even in sand. This is called the 'Championship' lawn-



THE 'CYPRUS' POST

tennis post, for which a screw is employed instead of spikes. For this a 'driver' is required to make a hole in the ground; a screw 2 ft. long is driven in with a spanner nearly to the level of the soil; the foot of the post is then inserted under the head of the screw, and a very slight turn of the spanner suffices to make and keep everything firm. The wheel and ratchet arrangement is the same as in the 'Cavendish' post.

Both of these posts are rather expensive, and, being made of ash wood, if not removed from the ground at night or in wet weather, their lower portions are apt in time to rot from the damp. To obviate these two objections, but especially that of expense, a new post has recently been introduced, which is called the 'Cyprus.' It is constructed of iron, and being tubular, is lighter and less unwieldy than most posts of that material. The foot and spikes to secure it are on the same principle as in the 'Cavendish' post, and the wheel and ratchet winder do not materially differ from it, while the price is considerably less. It may be advisable to increase the size of the foot, which has a tendeney to bury itself in soft ground, and so to draw the post out of the perpendicular. All the above implements are made and sold by Mr. Ayres.



'CYPRUS' RATCHET AND WINDER

Mr. Gardiner's 'Club' post also is excellent. It rests in a socket and is removable at will. The socket is furnished with a plate fixed at right angles to the direction of the net, the great leverage of which makes it capable of withstanding almost any strain. Mr. Slazenger's 'Association' lawn-tennis pole is somewhat similar, but to increase its stability a second smaller plate is added lower down, facing outwards. A flange at the top of the socket is designed to prevent it from sinking too far into the ground, while to avoid the trouble of passing the copper wire of the net through the winder, a chain is fastened to the latter fitted with a bar. The loop of the wire is passed over the bar, and wire and chain are then wound together on the winder. Gardiner's and Slazenger's posts

share the advantage that the lawn can be mown without disturbing the sockets, while they are open to the objection that considerable force must be exerted to fix them, and a rather large hole is made in the ground. It is not to be supposed that these are the only posts in existence which are fairly satisfactory. Many others might be mentioned, the best of which are but little inferior to those named above, while the worst of them are far superior to any system requiring the support of guys or ropes. Perhaps it is not too much to hope, as the price of some of the best of the self-supporting posts has been brought to so low a figure, that we have now seen the last of the old rotten rope attached at the one end to a post dragged far out of the perpendicular, and therefore of a quite incorrect height, and at the other to a peg which the tension has drawn out of the soil, and which every five minutes requires the application of a not unfrequently ineffective mallet.

Good nets may be procured from all the well-known dealers. They should be tarred and waterproof, and it is the truest economy to get them of the best quality. If properly taken care of these will last a very long while, the only necessary precaution being to remove them from the posts every evening. If this is not done, no net, however good, can be expected to last long; nor can any post, however carefully constructed and fixed, keep its position permanently in any soil. It would seem unnecessary to insist on this self-evident proposition, did not experience prove that on private grounds removal is the exception and not the rule. On many club grounds not only the nets, but the posts also, are removed after use, to their great advantage in respect of durability and consequent economy. The top of the net should be bound with a strip of white canvas about two inches broad, without which most players find it difficult to see the top of the net, especially when the light is bad.

Many ingenious devices have been adopted to ascertain and secure the proper height of the net. The simplest is a stick

or iron fork; but each of these methods is open to the objection that the ball frequently strikes it and is deflected from its course. The use of a chain is not liable to this defect, but it has been found to wear out the net, and cannot, therefore, be altogether recommended. The least objectionable form of chain is Slazenger's net regulator. The centre of the prong is sunk in the ground so that the lawn-tennis marker can pass over it, and the chain is attached to a leather loop passed round the edging of the net. The chain, of course, neither expands nor contracts, and the inventor claims for the regulator the advantage that no part of the court is concealed by it. On the whole, the neatest appliance yet produced is Hope's 'Pattern' band, fitted with an adjuster, i.e. a straining screw, to counteract the rise or fall of the net from increased or diminished moisture. The band being made of canvas is, of course, liable to contract in damp weather, and further experience of the counterbalancing screw may perhaps be required before it can be unhesitatingly recommended.

HOPE'S 'PATTERN' BAND AND ADJUSTER

One essential to good lawn tennis—the most important of all—has yet to be mentioned. It is needless to say that this is the ball, and in theory, at least, no one will be found to deny that, if lawn tennis is worth playing at all, the best balls in the best condition should always be employed. The time has gone by for insisting on this particular in respect to public tournaments, but at many private or semi-private meetings competitors are still expected to play with old, worn, dirty, and flabby balls, while it is a commonplace occurrence on private lawns to find these, and even a worse sample, supplied without hesitation or apology. It would be equally unnecessary to insist at the present time on the fact that, unless intended for some special purpose, balls must be covered with white cloth, were it not that

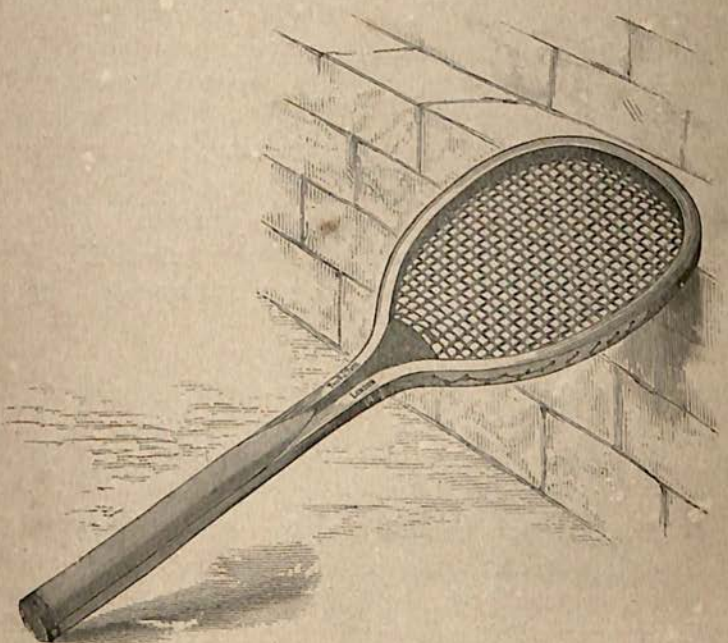
complete sets of lawn-tennis implements, advertised and doubtless sold, still sometimes include a certain number of uncovered balls. All good balls now in use are under-sewn—a vast improvement introduced by Mr. Ayres—the result of which has been that whereas formerly the stitches would give way before the ball had lost its elasticity, the covering will now in almost all cases outlast the ball itself. In general it is of little use to attempt to keep balls through the winter. A trial may be made with occasional success in a dry, warm cupboard; and not only frost, but even a moderate degree of cold, as well as damp, must be carefully avoided. It might be worth while to add the precaution of keeping balls in sawdust to exclude the air, but with the most elaborate care they will generally be found after the winter to be dead and inelastic. Good balls are sold by many makers, conforming in size and weight with the requirements of the laws; but so long as Ayres' 'Championship' balls are, as is now the case, selected for use at nearly all the chief public tournaments, it is unnecessary, and would be useless, to mention other descriptions.

There is far more scope for individual taste in the selection of a racket. The essential points are—a good hoop, free from knots, with a well-marked and continuous grain; a plain wooden handle, round or slightly octagonal, fitting the hand of the player, and attached to the middle-piece without any perceptible interval; and good strong gut. The screw which passes through the hoop and the middle-piece is important, and should be carefully examined. The thickness of the hoop is to some extent a matter of taste. The thinner hoop has rather more 'play,' but far less durability; while a very thick one will probably be found to be too tightly strung, and certainly will increase the weight of the racket; but in any case there should be sufficient strength at the 'bow,' just below the centre-piece. It is possible to string too tightly, though this is a defect which a few days' play will generally modify, and the degree of tightness desirable varies with the style and taste of the player. The racket when swung lightly by the butt must come up easily, yet

not too easily, and good balance is not to be tested altogether by the centre of gravity or by any other rule. An experienced player will know what suits him better than anyone else can tell him, and will soon become accustomed to any slight divergence from theoretical perfection, while a beginner will seldom be able to choose a racket for himself, and had better resort to some competent adviser. The weight is an equally important matter, and to a still greater extent depends on the style of the player. Within limits weight means increased power, lightness greater resource. Taking, therefore, 15 oz. as the maximum and 14¼ oz. as the minimum to be recommended, there is considerable room for choice. A volleyer by preference will generally select a lighter racket, and the habitual back-player one approaching to the maximum weight; but each description of player may take as a guide the rule that, while it is an advantage to use a racket as heavy as is compatible with absolute freedom, there should, nevertheless, always be a margin for possible emergencies and sudden effort. The shape of the racket is of less consequence. The curve, borrowed from Tennis, which was so marked a feature in the type in vogue a few years ago, was valuable so long as most strokes were made with a horizontal racket. Now that most hard strokes are made with a racket nearly vertical, the curve has become less desirable, or even injurious, as tending to increase the difficulty of striking the ball with the middle of the racket. The Messrs. Renshaw prefer to have a slight curve, while Mr. Lawford brings the curve to an irreducible minimum. The accompanying illustration is from a racket made in 1889 for the writer by Tate, who has been for many years racket-maker in ordinary to the three distinguished players above mentioned, as well as to many more of the best-known players of the day. Among makers of less expensive rackets of excellent quality may be mentioned Holden, Ayres, and Slazenger, the last of whom has introduced a slight additional curve, technically known as a 'lob,' on the lower side of the head of his rackets, for the purpose of adding to the weight of that part. This

innovation is believed to have been suggested by Mr. E. W. Lewis, and to be approved by many first-class players as giving increased force and severity both to service and drive.

Players should at all times have at least two pairs of shoes—one for use when the grass is in the smallest degree damp, with a leather sole fitted with the short nails known as steel-points, which are allowed on all grounds, though spikes, screws, and



THE RACKET

other nails are prohibited ; the other pair for dry grounds, with either a roughened or smooth india-rubber sole. Those who play much on asphalte frequently feel the unpleasant jar to the feet caused by so hard and unyielding a substance. A special shoe has been introduced by Messrs. Cording, consisting of an ordinary india-rubber sole, above which is a layer of spongy india-rubber covered over with a thin strip of leather. The

result is said to be a high degree of durability and elasticity combined. With these remarks, intended as an expression of opinion only, the whole question of dress may safely be left to individual discretion.

Such are the implements without which lawn tennis cannot conveniently be played. Among those which, though not necessary, are useful, may be mentioned the racket press to keep the racket from warping and losing its shape. To a player who uses a light racket this is essential, unless he be one of those epicures who buy a new one every year. The writer has one of Tate's rackets which has stood the wear and tear of eight seasons and the ordeal of re-stringing, and, though it has never been in a press, it has not lost its shape or warped in the slightest degree. Such a piece of wood, cannot, however, be counted on by a purchaser. Two flat boards of sufficient thickness to keep them from warping, with one or more screws, are all that are required, and the cost of the simpler kinds is very moderate.

Wherever matches are to be played an umpire's chair becomes necessary. A few years ago a fragile chair unstably balanced on a rickety table was considered good enough, and the accurate scoring of the game was not facilitated by the discomfort of the situation. It may have been partly for this reason that secretaries and managers have found it so difficult to procure an adequate supply of efficient umpires. The only requisites are sufficient height and stability. These are fairly realised by Hope's 'Pattern' umpire's chair, which is furnished with a back, the inclination of which might easily be made capable of being varied at will, and a small desk to hold the scoring card.

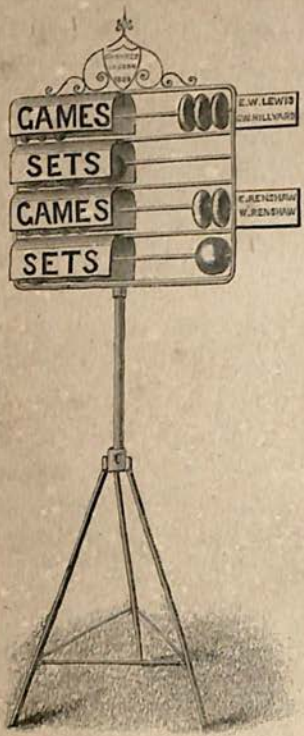
A perfectly satisfactory scoring board has not yet been produced. It is, of course, not generally required on private lawns, so that the ingenuity of inventors has not been stimulated by a large demand. It is an article which can hardly be made beautiful, so that the aim to be attained is limited to facility of manipulation and clearness of expression. The

names of the players, and the number of sets, and of games in the pending set already won by each, must be denoted. Numerical figures require mechanism, and unless carefully used are apt to give an erroneous record. It is for this reason, as well as on the ground of expense, that a scoring board known

HOPE'S UMPIRE'S SEAT

as the 'Abacus,' because it follows the principle of the old game of that name, is on the whole preferable. White and black wooden balls are strung on a wire at the side of the words 'Sets' and 'Games' respectively; and one of the balls is

pushed forward into prominence from behind the board by means of a stick at the conclusion of a game or set. No mechanism is required, and the balls are easily seen from most parts of the ground.




'ABACUS' SCORING BOARD

It is believed that the preceding list includes all implements either necessary or useful to the game of lawn tennis. It may still be necessary to add that in tournaments each court should be separated from those adjoining it by high nets, and that on private lawns players will find comfort for themselves, economy of balls, and the retention of temper, all promoted by the free use of common nets, which may be procured almost anywhere at the price of twopence per running yard 6 ft. high. A nominal height of 9 ft. would be better still, as the nets lose considerably in height as they are drawn out in length. When they begin to wear out they may be handed over to the gardener, to serve the meaner use of protecting next year's strawberry beds. The youth of dirty balls may be renewed by the ball-cleaning machines sold for that purpose by J. Osmond, or by the cheaper and simpler agency of the hall-door mat, and the same means will remove green grass stains ; but soaked balls are of no use for any purpose, and it is but lost labour to bestow any pains upon them. For this reason they cannot be washed with much success, and all attempts to restore whiteness to balls by 'trouncing' or otherwise have been found useless, and have been practically abandoned.

# CHAPTER VIII

## FIRST STEPS

The Court's a learning place.
SHAKSPEARE, *All's Well*, Act i. sc. 1

FIRST steps are proverbially difficult, and lawn tennis forms no exception to a rule which is, in fact, a condition of human nature. The difficulty of making them is, however, at least equalled by that of describing or directing them. To teach lawn tennis on paper is almost as hopeless as to teach swimming on a table. Excellence in a game, as in other things, is the product of natural aptitude and long and assiduous practice. There are, however, certain indispensable principles on the one hand, and certain natural but vicious habits on the other; and the observation of the former equally with the avoidance of the latter can to some extent be inculcated by precept. Strong natural aptitude amounts to genius, and is almost independent of instruction; long-established habit either is incapable of profiting by, or has outgrown the necessity for it. This chapter is intended, therefore, mainly for the ordinary beginner, who has neither acquired the one nor is gifted with the other; but if anyone after some practice finds that the ball struck by him does not travel at a fair pace, or that he has not adequate control over its direction, it is probable that his method is in some way unsound, and in that case he may without presumption be recommended to resume the study of first principles. Two physical qualities are necessary for lawn tennis as for other games—a good eye and activity—but the importance of each of these is often overrated. Nearly all English boys have played

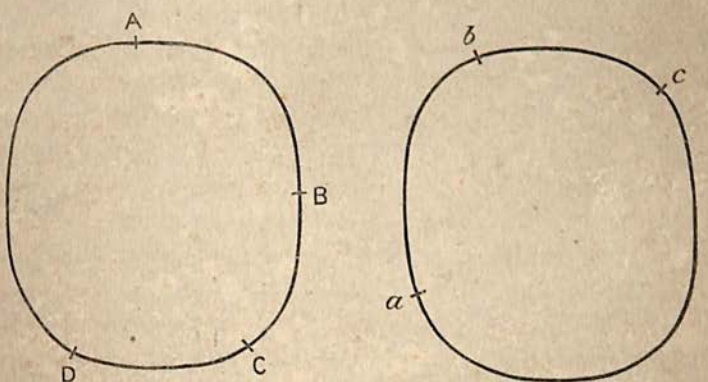
some game of ball; the eye and the hand have been to some extent trained to act together, and what is called a good eye, as distinguished from quickness of sight, which is quite a different thing, is principally the result of the acquisition of this habit. The same thing is to a great extent true of activity. Balls are reached in most cases more by starting at once and in the right direction than by abnormal rapidity of movement. Let no young player be discouraged at the outset by the consciousness that he is not pre-eminently gifted by Nature in these respects. Both may to a great extent be acquired. Most people, however, are already possessed of sufficient eye to enable them to hit the ball; the difficulty is to hit it with effect, and for this the first requisite is to hold the racket correctly. On this point there is no absolute uniformity in the practice of the best players, nor is there entire agreement among the writers on the subject. Dr. Dwight urges strongly the extreme importance of being able to play a ball either fore-handed or back-handed without changing the hold on the racket, on the ground that 'a change must require a certain amount of time and attention which cannot well be spared;' and he therefore recommends a method of grasping the racket which is intended to obviate the necessity of change. I cannot concur with this reasoning, and my convictions are strengthened by the great authority of Mr. Wilberforce, who says,[1] 'The time taken up by changing the grip is infinitesimal, and with practice becomes purely mechanical.' And again, 'I am firmly persuaded that with an unchanged grip there is less power of hitting, and, moreover, the racket is prevented from hitting the ball full, that is to say, without causing a twist.'

Now, the main object of modern lawn tennis is to meet the ball with a full racket, and though the accomplished player will on occasion deviate from this rule, it should be regarded by the learner as a law of the Medes and Persians. A short experiment will prove that there is no way of holding the racket unchanged for fore-hand and back-hand strokes alike

[1] *Lawn Tennis*, by H. W. Wilberforce, p. 20.

which will not seriously compromise the freedom of the player, especially if the ball does not bound exactly as he expects. For this reason it is strongly recommended to the learner not to put himself into manacles by adopting the unchanged grip. Mr. Wilberforce's advice is so sound and so clearly stated that it is impossible to improve on it, and it is therefore, with the diagrams illustrating it, here reproduced *verbatim* :—

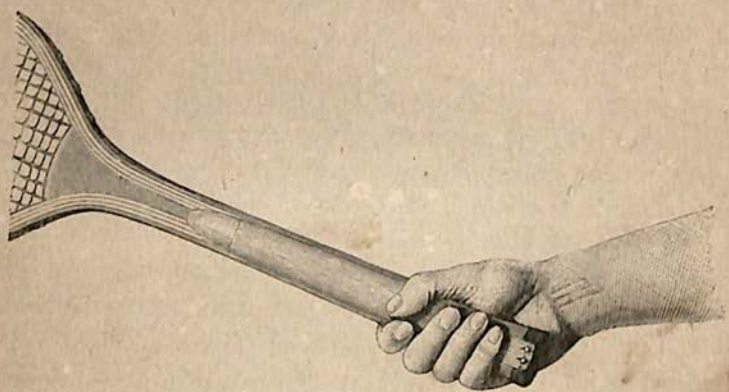
'Take the racket in the left hand by the splice, the blade being *vertical* and the handle *horizontal*; then for the fore-hand stroke (the figure being a vertical section of the handle) the base of the right hand will just overlap the butt; the




knuckle of the thumb will be at A, the knuckle of the forefinger at B, the bend of the first joint of the forefinger at C, and of the second joint at D; the first joint will slope towards the blade, the other joints away from the blade; the thumb will slope very slightly towards the blade, its last joint jutting out from the handle; the first joints of the other fingers will lie across the handle at right angles.

'For the back-hand stroke the knuckle of the thumb will be at *a*, the knuckle of the forefinger at *b*, and the bend of the first joint at *c*; the slope of the fingers will be exactly the same as in the fore-hand stroke; in fact, the change from the fore-hand to the back-hand stroke is simply turning the hand back

in the direction of the body, though rather more than a right angle. The racket should be grasped as firmly as possible if it is intended to make a severe stroke; it may be held more loosely for a gentle one.' [1]



FORE-HAND GRIP

BACK-HAND GRIP

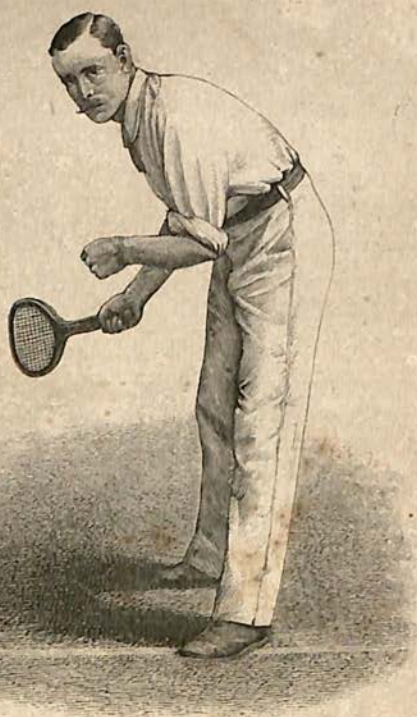
The adoption of a right grasp of the racket is so important that drawings are appended showing the hand and butt of the racket for the fore-hand and back-hand strokes respectively, in order to make the relative positions of each clear to the eye as well as to the understanding.

[1] *Lawn Tennis*, by H. W. Wilberforce, pp. 20, 21.

But let the beginner remember that neither of these positions will come so naturally to him as to dispense with a good deal of trouble on his part. He will constantly find the racket slipping into a wrong position, and he should therefore at first make it his constant practice to satisfy himself that his hold is right before he prepares to receive the ball. After a time habit will cause the racket to fall naturally into the right position for the fore-hand or back-hand stroke, and he may then cease to think about it. Later on, he may—and if he ever becomes a good player he certainly will—change his hold according to the stroke he intends; but for the present his watchwords should be 'Fore-hand grip' and 'Back-hand grip,' and, in familiar words, let him see that he gets it. The best way to secure this would be to induce a friend to toss a number of consecutive balls over the net to his fore-hand, and then a number to his back-hand. When he has got fairly accustomed to take them consecutively they may be alternated, and with care and attention habit will make the change mechanical. In the absence of a friend sufficiently good-natured, some writers recommend practice against a wall, now on one side, now on the other, and taking the ball at the volley and the half-volley in succession, and afterwards combining all the varieties one after the other. This course will doubtless assist the learner to acquire readiness and accuracy; but he must remember that the ball will return from a wall at a different velocity and in a different manner from those it takes from the racket, and the court itself will therefore be the best as well as the most amusing school. The rudiments of one description of return mentioned by Dr. Dwight may undoubtedly be acquired in this manner. A ball that has passed the player on his back-hand is sometimes returned by bringing the right foot across and well behind the left, so that the body is turned almost to face the base-line; but this resource, though useful for extrication from a difficulty, is so much of the nature of a *tour de force*, that the beginner cannot be recommended to spend much time on its acquisition, though more advanced students

may think it worth while to return to school in order to learn it.

To return to our tiro. As soon as he has learned to hold his racket correctly, and to alter his grasp instinctively when required, he must direct his attention to the attitude which he is to assume. The player should rest the blade of the racket



PREPARING FOR FORE-HAND STROKE

upon the fingers of the left hand. He should stand with his body facing the net, so that a start may be made at once in either direction; his knees should be bent, his feet slightly apart and turned a little outwards, with the weight of the body resting on the toes rather than on the heels. The moment it is seen that the ball will come to the fore-hand, the left foot

should be brought across and in front of the right, which will turn the body sideways, and the racket should be swung back to a greater or less extent according to the intended strength of the stroke. At the moment of striking, the weight of the body should be transferred from the right to the left foot, and the stroke will be stronger if this is accompanied by a short step forward

PREPARING FOR BACK-HAND STROKE

with the left foot. Mr. Wilberforce believes that accuracy is sacrificed by the forward step ; on the other hand, it is certain that freedom is gained by it, and the weight of the body is more effectively and naturally thrown into the stroke in this way than by bending the knee only.

For the back-hand stroke the process is reversed. The

right foot is brought across the left, the body faces to the left, and the weight is transferred from the left to the right foot. The engraving illustrates the preparation for rather than the stroke itself, and the change of position has not yet been effected. The beginner should make it an invariable rule to take the ball when it is falling. He will see fine players occasionally deviate from this rule, and the time may come when he also will be able to do so with advantage; but for the present he will find that to take the ball falling not only gives him a longer sight of it, but also that it will go off his racket at a better angle, and will make a more effective stroke. Above all, let him meet it with a full racket every time, with no twist or cut, and as hard as he can without sending the ball out of court. He is not now playing a match. A few balls put in the net or out of court will cost him nothing, and it is easy to moderate his strength; while if he now falls into habits of timidity and the practice of patting the ball instead of hitting it, the difficulty of afterwards acquiring a strong stroke will be immensely increased.

With this view he should endeavour to strike the ball with so much force that it shall drop[1] between the service-line and the base-line. If it drop nearer to the net than the former it is a weak stroke, and his opponent has comparatively little difficulty in crushing it or playing it away from him. If it drop close to the base-line he will have a much longer sight of the return and greater choice of position, and, in addition to these advantages, it is always difficult to make a decisive stroke from a ball dropping in that part of the court. Let it be the constant aim, therefore, to make the ball drop as near as possible to the base-line. This is the most essential condition of good lawn tennis. No perfection of eye, no amount of activity, no skill in service or volley, will compensate for the want of what is known as a 'good length.' The beginner should therefore direct his undivided attention to the acquisi-

[1] It may be superfluous to explain that a ball is said to 'drop' at its first bound and to 'fall' at its second.

tion of a strong stroke, without allowing himself to be seduced by the charms of what may in comparison be called the accessories of the game—twist or cut, volley or half-volley. When he has made himself master of a strong, unvarying stroke with a full racket, he may pass on to the acquisition of the luxuries of lawn tennis, because he will have ceased to be a beginner and will already be a formidable antagonist to ordinary players.

The following maxims may, however, be observed both now and even in later stages of progress:—

1. Do not play too long at a time. About one hour every day, or two hours every other day, will be enough for most people. If the muscles are fatigued, the attention will be relaxed and faulty habits more readily acquired.

2. Always play your best, and, if possible, leave off when your interest in the game is insufficient to induce you to do your utmost.

3. Make yourself thoroughly acquainted with the laws of lawn tennis. Some good players do not know or are indifferent to them, and their play suffers in consequence.

4. Make it a rule always to observe the laws, and invariably play the strict game. If a beginner, for instance, is lax in the position of his feet for the service, it is probable that in his first match the umpire will remind him of his error in a manner very detrimental to his chance of success. Again, if he allows himself for the sake of convenience to stop a ball which would drop out of court, he will be not unlikely to continue the habit in matches.

5. Take care that the net is the right height, and in marking out the court be sure that you have done so correctly. Length and elevation become by practice to some extent mechanical, and a very small deviation will put you out materially.

6. Always assume that the ball will be returned. It is no excuse even to yourself, still less to your partner in the double game, to say, 'I thought it was not coming over.'

7. Start at once for every ball. You will often start wrong,

but practice will more and more correct this tendency, and the habit of quick starting, which can be acquired, will often take the place of activity, which is a gift of Nature.

8. Do not try to deceive your antagonist. You will fail more often than you succeed, and the attempt will put you off your balance and will spoil your chance of attaining position for the next stroke.

9. Play if possible with players better than yourself, taking odds sufficient to compel your opponent to do his best. You will thereby get better practice, and the gradual reduction of the odds will be a test of progress and a great encouragement to yourself.

10. Above all, watch good players: at first, in order to see how they stand, how they hold the racket and hit the ball; afterwards, in order to ascertain their position in the court, and to learn as much as possible of their tactics in play.

Some of these maxims are more or less applicable according to temperament and physical strength. Others are counsels of perfection which cannot in all cases be followed implicitly. It would be satisfactory were it possible to add yet one more to the list—always play with good balls on a good court; but civilization has not yet advanced far enough for a player to insist invariably on this condition without incurring, especially in the country, the imputation of conceit, churlishness, or discourtesy.

# CHAPTER IX

## SERVICE

The poorest service is repaid with thanks.
SHAKSPEARE, *Taming of the Shrew*, Act iv. sc. 3

ASSUREDLY it cannot be said of service in lawn tennis as it was in tennis, 'Le service, c'est l'âme du jeu'; nor will any lawn-tennis player be able to give to an inquirer as to the varieties and quality of his service the reply which is said to have fallen from an eminent French tennis player: 'Moi, Monsieur, j'en ai quarante-deux.' To the wealth and abundance of the older game in this respect the poverty of lawn tennis affords a striking contrast. It may have been a scoffer who defined service as 'hitting one ball hard into a net and dropping another gently over it,' but it is certain that the monotony of this branch of lawn tennis is a defect in the game. Greatly as the actual strength and severity of service has grown during the last few years, it cannot be doubted that it was relatively more important in 1877, when, as we have seen, the proportion of games won by the server to those won by the striker-out was about five to three. So great a preponderance as this could not be tolerated, and successive alterations of the service-line have combined with greatly improved return to reduce the value of the service; and at the present moment it is a matter of doubt whether it is an advantage in a match between two even players to have the service. At all events, players whose service is not the weakest part of their game have often waived their privilege, not only to secure the better side, but for so small an apparent advantage as was until the

recent change in the law derived from the delivery of service constantly from that end which is affected by sun or wind, in spite of the fact that in most matches a few services are delivered which are practically unreturnable.

For all service alike the player must conform to laws 7, 8, and 9;[1] and, in the four-handed game, to laws 32 and 33 also. Law 7 prescribes the position of the server. He 'shall stand with one foot beyond (i.e. further from the net than) the base-line, and with the other foot upon the base-line,' otherwise it is a fault; but it is not now 'a fault if the server's foot, which is beyond the base-line, do not touch the ground at the moment at which the service is delivered'—an alteration, made in 1885, which has removed a frequent cause of faults.

The paucity of services has been mentioned; contrary to the usual formula, it is even more real than apparent. On paper, indeed, it is possible to make a list of varieties which is almost imposing. There are the over-hand fast service; the over-hand twist, given fast or slow and fore-handed as well as back-handed; the reverse over-hand twist, the horizontal service, the under-hand twist fore-handed and back-handed, which, like its over-hand brother, may receive a reverse twist; and there are also some specimens of fancy service which are as varied and indefinite as was Mr. Winkle's shooting. In practice this ambitious array must be admitted to shrink to very meagre proportions. The real strength of lawn tennis in this department is centred in the hard over-hand service, with which nearly every player commences, to which he is as constant as the exigencies of the game allow, and which he abandons only from fear of faults. Captious critics have often charged this particular service with the multiplication of faults, and the alleged waste of time consequent upon them; while some have even demanded that a single fault should count as a stroke. The result would probably be to deprive the service of its chief interest by driving this particular species entirely out of the field. If a ball could by possibility travel in a direct line from the

[1] See Appendix II.

racket to the ground, very few such services delivered by a man of ordinary stature could drop within the service-line. Fortunately it cannot travel except in a curve, and therefore some proportion of these services delivered at full speed escape the category of faults; but to do so they must drop within a margin of about two feet along the service-line—a limit sufficiently narrow, and affording a strong argument against the abolition of the first fault.

*Over-hand Fast Service.*—In delivering the over-hand fast service without any premeditated twist the first object is pace. The server will therefore naturally adopt such a position on the base-line, and such a mode of swinging the racket, as will most conduce to the attainment of the primary requisite. In regard to position, the toe of the front foot must be placed on the base-line and kept there until the ball has been struck. Some authorities recommend a short step forward, in order to throw the weight of the body into the service, but if law 7 is to be construed strictly it may be doubted whether the server who makes a forward step can be said to 'stand' in accordance with the law. In any case the forward step is dangerous, as the foot may not be placed precisely on the line, or the umpire, seeing the foot not to be there just before and immediately after the service, will almost inevitably be led to think that it never was there at all, and in either case a fault will be the consequence. The server may occupy any station he pleases on the base-line of his service half-court. A position at or close to the corner of the court gives a longer diagonal, and the distance over which the striker-out *may* have to travel in order to reach the ball is also somewhat greater; but these advantages are more than counterbalanced by the greater distance which the server himself will have to traverse in order to place himself in position for the next stroke, as well as by the fact that by serving from the corner he loses the chance of the very effective service down the centre-line. It is usual, therefore, to deliver this service from the centre-line, or about two or three feet to the right or left of it. The striker-out should vary his position

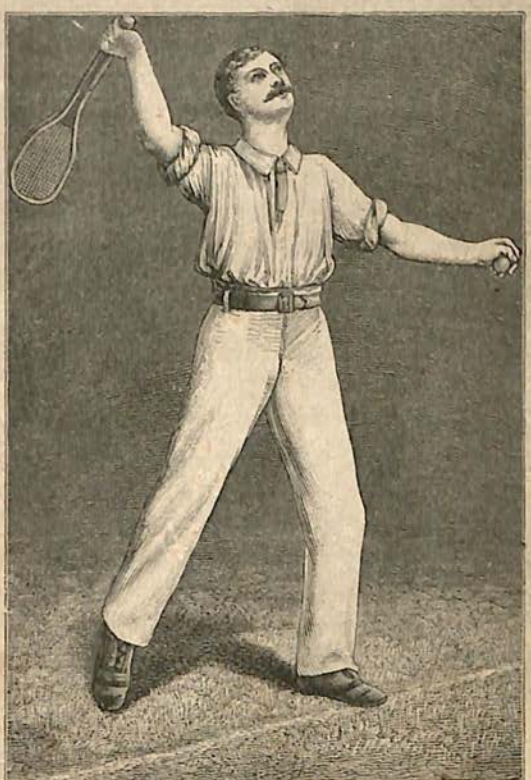
according to that of the server, having regard to the pace of the service and the state of the ground. If the service be delivered from the centre-line, he will stand nearly, but not quite, behind the corner of the court, and a move by the

OVER-HAND SERVICE

server towards the corner will be met by a corresponding move to his own right or left by the striker-out.

The next point is the swing for the service. The ball should be thrown gently up, nearly opposite to the right ear,

to about the height to which the server can conveniently reach, and should be struck at its highest point just as it begins to fall. The body will sway slightly backwards and forwards once or more, the weight being transferred from one foot to the other till the moment of striking, when it will finally be thrown on the front foot, the other being generally lifted at the same



THE SERVICE

time. The effect of the service will depend upon the accuracy with which it is timed. So far all players are agreed; but there is room for difference in regard to the swing. Some swing the racket directly backwards, so that when it is at its lowest point it is hanging behind the right shoulder. Greater

speed can be obtained if it be swung much further back, so that at its furthest it is nearly horizontal, with the blade behind, or even projecting beyond, the left shoulder; but in this way it is more difficult to strike the ball with a full racket. In either case the server should make ample use of his height, and strike the ball at a point as high as he can conveniently reach. Unfortunately, the first service is not unfrequently a fault; the chief point then is to avoid a repetition of it. Most players make their second service almost the counterpart of the first, only modifying the pace, and endeavouring to make more accurate placing atone for want of speed. In this case all attempt at the latter should be abandoned, and the attention directed solely to the object of making the ball drop as near to the service-line as is compatible with absolute safety. It will be better, if possible, to serve to the back-hand of the striker-out, because few players are as strong back-handed as fore-handed. Pace may be disregarded, because it is not more difficult, if indeed it be not easier, to return severely a moderately quick service of this kind than a slow one, while the latter certainly admits of more accurate placing. The server who has made a fault will find the over-hand and under-hand twist services to be useful alternatives to that now spoken of, and something may be said for them even as first services.

*Over-hand Twist.*—The over-hand twist should generally be delivered from the corner of the fore-hand court, and if resorted to at all when the service is from the back-hand court, it should be given from near the half-court line. It is of little use against a strong player, its only merit being that, when delivered from the fore-hand corner, the twist of the ball will drive him outside his court, and so make it rather more difficult for him to attain position. When the ground is wet or slow it will be found a useful variety. The attitude and swing are somewhat similar to those adopted for the over-hand fast service, though much less swing is required, pace not being here the first object. The body is turned to face the side-line, the racket is grasped in a manner which is about midway between those recom-

mended above for the fore-hand and back-hand strokes, and at the moment of striking it is made to curl round the ball from right to left, holding it as long as possible. In this way a very considerable twist from right to left can be imparted to the ball, while pace is still not altogether neglected. It is obvious that this right-to-left twist is much less effective from the back-hand court, and for that reason this service when so delivered cannot be strongly recommended, except against an opponent who is slow on his feet, in which case a service of this kind made to drop close to the net is very effective, especially against a strong wind.

*Horizontal Service.*—Another variety, useful more particularly from the left court, is the horizontal or cut service. The racket is not swung higher than the shoulder, and at the moment of striking it can hardly be too low, though it must still be kept horizontal by stooping the body. The face of the racket is quite open, and in striking passes along the under side of the ball, causing it to rotate vertically, and imparting to it much cut, accompanied generally by some lateral twist. For some reason difficult to explain, the ball on touching the ground will generally shoot more or less, particularly on a damp surface, and when such is the case it is useful, as well as for occasional variety ; and it has the advantage of going to the back-hand of the striker-out, so that in the four-handed game it has a tendency to separate the partners in such a way as to leave a *défaut* between them which may be useful at the next stroke. As a continuance, or against good players, it is for the most part of little use, and is only better than a mere toss.

*Under-hand Twist.*—The under-hand twist is a more valuable but still rather uncommon resource. The desperate yet most judicious employment of it by Mr. E. Renshaw, in 1883, at the close of his memorable match against Mr. Lawford, is a remarkable proof of the occasional value of this service, which, so long as that match is remembered, will be retained in the armoury of lawn-tennis players, though no one would dream of resorting to it habitually.

It should be delivered back-handed from the right and fore-handed from the left court. In delivering it fore-handed the ball is dropped in front of the left foot, and is struck when about a foot or even less from the ground. The racket, held downwards, is swung almost vertically from right to left, and in the act of striking passes round the ball on its left side as though it were intended to cut a slice out of it. A great amount of lateral twist can thus be given, and the striker-out is driven out of court, to the prejudice of his position; but it must be admitted that if the ball bounds at all high a crushing return across the court is comparatively easy. The effect is assisted by a quick turn of the wrist in the act of striking, and, when delivered fore-handed, the ball after the bound will break from left to right, while, if given back-handed, it will twist from right to left.

*Reverse Over-hand.*—The reverse over-hand service is strongly recommended by Dr. Dwight, and, as it has not been extensively adopted in this country, it is better to describe it in his own words.[1] It is given in the 'same manner as the fore-handed, except that the ball is thrown a little to the left of the head and farther forward than in the fore-handed service. The racket passes in front of the face and round the ball from right to left.' The ball on bounding will break from left to right. In regard to all these varieties, with the exception of the over-hand fast service, it may be said that the value of them depends mainly on the judgment with which they are employed. In this, as in other parts of the game, the server should study the characteristics of his opponent's game, and the discovery of a weak point may guide him in the selection of service. He will not win many strokes against a good player directly by any of them; but indirectly a well-chosen service will often conduce to the attainment of position, and ultimately to the winning of the rest. Even the over-hand fast service will not be very frequently unreturned, and it is a question how far a player not specially gifted in this respect should make it his first object to deliver it at lightning speed. Dr. Dwight recommends that he should do so even at the risk of many faults. Mr. Wilberforce

[1] 'Form in Lawn Tennis' *Scribner's Magazine*, vi. 141.

advises moderation in such a case. The safest rule will perhaps be to ascertain in practice what degree of speed is to the individual compatible with reasonable accuracy, and in matches to endeavour as far as possible to keep to that standard. Excessive temerity in endeavouring to force the pace will in this, as in most other competitions, lead to disaster, while timidity will leave the field open to a series of crushing repartees. The lines with which this chapter closes, altered in one word only from the original, indicate accurately enough what would have been the view on this subject of the short-sighted and indolent companion of our boyhood if he had devoted his attention to lawn tennis instead of to the art of poetry. The soundness of the advice may induce us to excuse the almost ostentatious avowal of his indifference to the art of the ball.

> Sumite materiam vestris qui *ludit*is æquam
> Viribus, et versate diu quid ferre recusent,
> Quid valeant humeri.[1]

which may be roughly translated :—

> Adopt a service suited to your strength ;
> If strong, hit hard ; if not, give heed to length.

[1] Horace, *De Arte Poet.* 38.

## CHAPTER X

### IN PLAY.

Yet would I knew that stroke would prove the worst.
SHAKSPEARE, *Othello*, Act iv. sc. 1

HOWEVER much games may differ from each other, they have features of resemblance as well as points of divergence; and almost every game played with a ball has at least one fundamental principle which is common to all alike. It is this: that the weapon with which the ball is struck must be made to move in the same plane as the ball for as long a time as possible. In cricket, tennis, billiards, and golf, this principle, variously expressed, is constantly insisted upon by the teacher, and its value is little if at all weakened by the fact that in two of them the object aimed at is moving, while in the others it is at rest. In the former case its validity is enhanced by the possibility of a false bound, but it derives its principal force from the imperfection of human nature. No eye is absolutely perfect, no judgment perfectly infallible, and even were they so, no hand could be implicitly relied on to carry out the design of eye and judgment unerringly. But these considerations, weighty as they are in other games, have even greater force in lawn tennis, because on the truest turf the course of the ball is liable to be deflected by very slight inequalities, and, being much lighter than a cricket ball, it will be more affected by them. If a match could be played from start to finish on a lawn of the smoothness of a billiard-table the aberrations of eye, hand, and judgment would still remain. If the racket is so held as to cross the flight of the ball, it is obvious that the time during which a

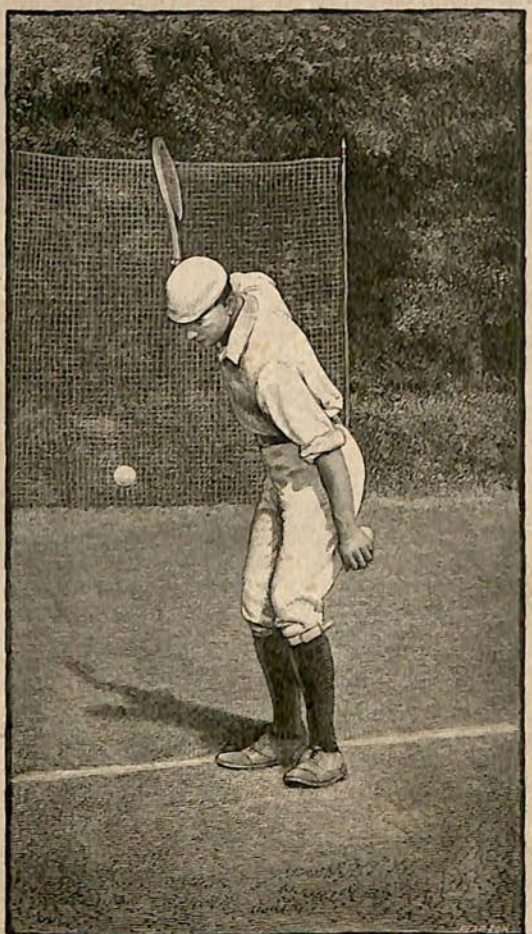
stroke can be made accurately is extremely short; but this period can be made relatively long if the racket is so moved as to be, both before and after the moment of intended contact, at right angles to the flight of the ball. This possibility of prolongation more than any increase of speed has exercised a powerful influence on lawn tennis. It has dictated the orthodox grasp of the racket, it has modified the attitude of the player, and it has developed the most characteristic feature of lawn tennis by the creation of the 'drive.'

*The Vertical Stroke.*—The elementary qualities of a good stroke off the ground have been already discussed,[1] but this stroke forms so large a part of lawn tennis that it is necessary to go more into detail. It has been said that in most cases the ball should be taken when it is dropping, but it does not follow that this is to be done at one elevation only. In fact there are two rival methods of striking the ball after it has bounded. For the first of these two methods it is allowed to drop almost to the ground, and is then met with an almost vertical racket, at the moment when it is nearly but not quite opposite to the forward foot, which will of course be the left foot in the forehand, the right foot in the back-hand stroke. At the moment of contact the racket is frequently lifted, and the ball is in consequence made to rotate vertically in the direction of its flight. This lifting of the racket tends to lift the ball also over the net, and when the initial force is nearly expended to bring it more quickly to the ground.

From this cause it is difficult to volley such a stroke well, but this is not all. The rotatory motion imparted to the ball causes it to leave the ground, after bounding, at a lower level and greater speed than it would have done had the racket not been lifted, and the difficulty of the return is increased by both these tendencies. This is, therefore, the lawn-tennis stroke *par excellence*; it is possessed by almost every good player of the present day, and will be acquired more easily by imitation than by description. When made at high speed from the back

[1] See Chapter VIII. p. 214 *sup.*

or corner of the court it is known as the 'drive.' It may be observed that in the woodcut the feet are rather too near together. The ball has perhaps come farther than the player



FORE-HAND DRIVE .

expected, and he has therefore been compelled to withdraw instead of advancing his left foot, and the stroke will suffer in

consequence. An illustration of the attitude for the back-hand drive is given on page 231.

The drive is the most brilliant and effective stroke of which the game is capable. The speed which can be imparted to the ball in this way must be seen to be believed, and a very

THE DRIVE

small proportion of such strokes ever come back. It is hardly necessary to add that, like most other brilliant feats, they involve some risk of failure. Naturally the whole class to which these strokes belong is available only when the ball does not

bound very high, and more frequently when the ground is dead than when it is very lively. After long-continued fine weather the bound is much higher, and many balls cannot be taken when they are close to the ground. It is in such cases that there is brought into play the second distinctive lawn-tennis stroke, known as

*The Horizontal Stroke.*—The ball is taken if possible nearly, but not quite, at the top of its bound. The racket is kept at about the level of the shoulder, the arm is rather stiff, and at the moment of striking a slight turn of the wrist causes the racket to take hold of the upper surface of the ball and to impart to it the same vertical forward rotation as in the stroke last mentioned, with the same advantages and the same increased speed after contact with the ground; and with the additional merit that, as the ball need not be lifted over the net, the curve is hardly perceptible, and interferes in even a smaller degree with the pace. The invention of this stroke is attributed to Mr. Lawford, and forms a most valuable addition to the power of attack. On one or other of these two principles the large majority of balls taken off the ground are returned. The horizontal stroke is most applicable when the player is standing near to the service-line, or when the ball has dropped between it and the net, because no lift is then required to surmount the latter, and the necessary pace can more easily be imparted. A ball dropping between the service and base lines is generally best returned by the under-hand stroke, because at such a distance from the net the curve required to pass over it is not violent, but in many cases the choice depends upon the height of the bound.

In view of these two strokes, which, when seen at their best, are simply the application of over-hand cut to the ball, it may seem almost paradoxical to say that the cut stroke is obsolete. Yet in the strict sense of the word this is the fact. In the early days of lawn tennis a few players had derived their training from a tennis court, and these naturally adopted the practice of the game which was most familiar to them. They knew that the

attainment of a well and heavily cut stroke was indispensable in the court, and they believed that it would be equally effective on turf. Their main object, therefore, was to hold the racket open or diagonally, to support the head, and to strike the ball on the under side, so as to cause it to rotate vertically in the direction contrary to that in which it was travelling, believing

BACK-HAND DRIVE

that a stroke thus effected would be more difficult of return than if made with a full racket. For the moment they were not disappointed. The stroke was unfamiliar to all but tennis players ; the ball rose from the ground at an unexpected angle and many points were won and reputations achieved by this stroke alone. The textbooks of that day recommended the acquisition of a well-cut stroke to every beginner, and to

increase its effect some even advised the use of an ordinary tennis racket, or at least of one made after its model with a very perceptible curve. But the difficulty in returning this stroke was soon found to be much exaggerated, and indeed to be in great measure imaginary. A singular instance of the extent to which even good players were at first puzzled by it, and of the rapidity with which they accustomed themselves to it, is afforded by a practice game played in 1880 at Wimbledon between Mr. Lawford and Mr. J. M. Heathcote, who had for many years been by far the best amateur tennis player of the day. Mr. Lawford, though not so strong a lawn-tennis player as he has since become, had at the time but two or three rivals. Mr. Heathcote seldom played lawn tennis, and had enjoyed no opportunities of practice with the best performers; yet the cut service and stroke so puzzled Mr. Lawford that for several games he missed stroke after stroke. All at once, as it were by intuition, he overcame the difficulty which had paralysed him; thenceforward his natural superiority reasserted itself, and, as might be expected, he easily defeated his opponent. The lesson which Mr. Lawford mastered before one set had been completed was learned by inferior players, more slowly indeed, but not less surely. The cut stroke was robbed of all its terrors and most of its value, and for many years it has only occasionally been seen in good matches, for the most part when it is desired to place the ball with great accuracy at no great distance from the net, or when the ground or the balls are damp, in which case the latter will have a tendency to shoot. Mr. W. Renshaw sometimes employs it on such occasions with great effect. The ball should always be taken when it is falling and generally as low as possible. The employment of cut in what is called the horizontal service has been already discussed in dealing with that subject, and with these exceptions the tennis cut has been discarded as tending to retard the progress of the ball, and may indeed be considered as obsolete, though a few elderly gentlemen who cherish the traditions of the past in remote and highly conservative

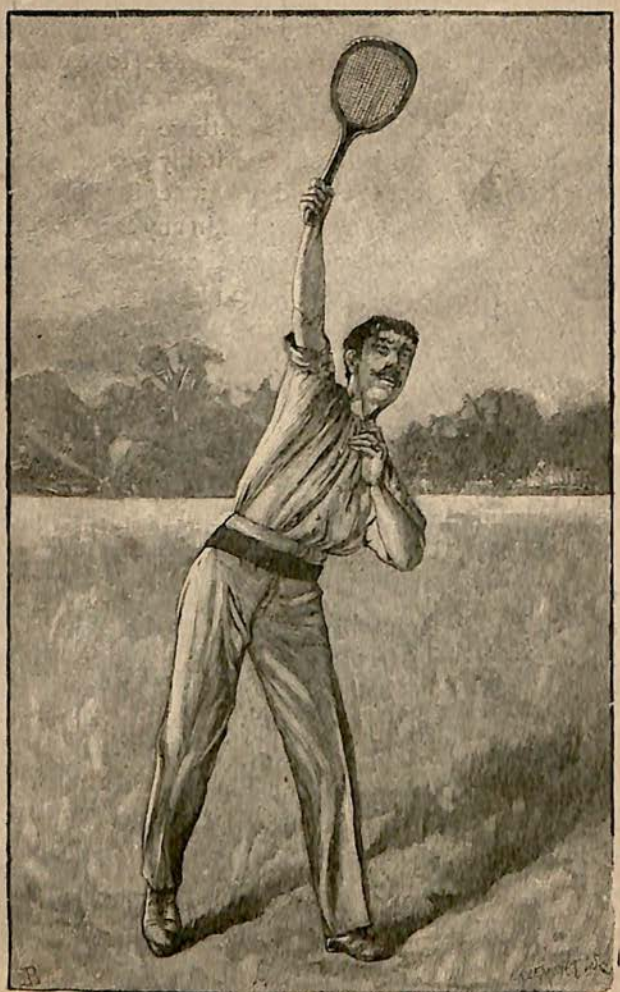
districts still occasionally employ it with effect against very bad players and the average lady.

One other stroke from the ground requires to be mentioned, though it is not often seen, and still more rarely meets with much success. It sometimes is impossible to take the ball otherwise than on the rise, or to do so may be too great a sacrifice of position. In such a case there should be little or no swing; a fast-rising ball will inevitably go out of court if it be struck at; the racket should only meet it with the view of placing it as accurately as possible; but in any case this is a dangerous resource, and should be adopted on an emergency only.

For all strokes off the ground the player should endeavour to arrive in time to place himself for the return. Some degree of stability is necessary for an effective stroke, and though one or two players may be named who apparently do not object to take the ball on the run, they are the exception and not the rule. To start at once, to arrive in time, and never to be in a hurry, are three maxims which most men will do well to remember.

*The Volley.*—Two of the three engines of attack available to lawn-tennis players, the service and the stroke off the ground, have now been described; the third, and by no means the least important, remains to be considered. The volley has undergone more than one change since it made its appearance in the first tournament of 1877. It has been the subject of extravagant eulogy, and the object of unmeasured abuse. Uninjured by either extreme, it may be said now as then to be a good slave but a bad master. It consists of three varieties, two of which are as old as the game, while the third is, as we have seen, the invention of the Renshaws. There is first the purely defensive volley, practically a kind of lob, by which a dropping ball is met and returned high in the air to avoid the necessity of quitting position in order to make the return off the ground. Of this variety, the main object of which is to gain time, nothing need be said but that it should be made to drop near the base-line, and, as it must be very slow, it must

be placed high enough to preclude the possibility of a crushing retort. The two other varieties are far more effective. Follow-



THE 'SMASH' (from *Scribner's Magazine*, VI. 132)

ing as far as circumstances permit the arrangement adopted in regard to service and stroke, volleys will be here divided into

two classes—the over-hand and the horizontal—a classification which, if not absolutely accurate, will be sufficiently intelligible. Almost all volleys delivered with any great degree of force will fall into the over-hand category, while the horizontal will comprise nearly all those for which the racket is little if at all swung.

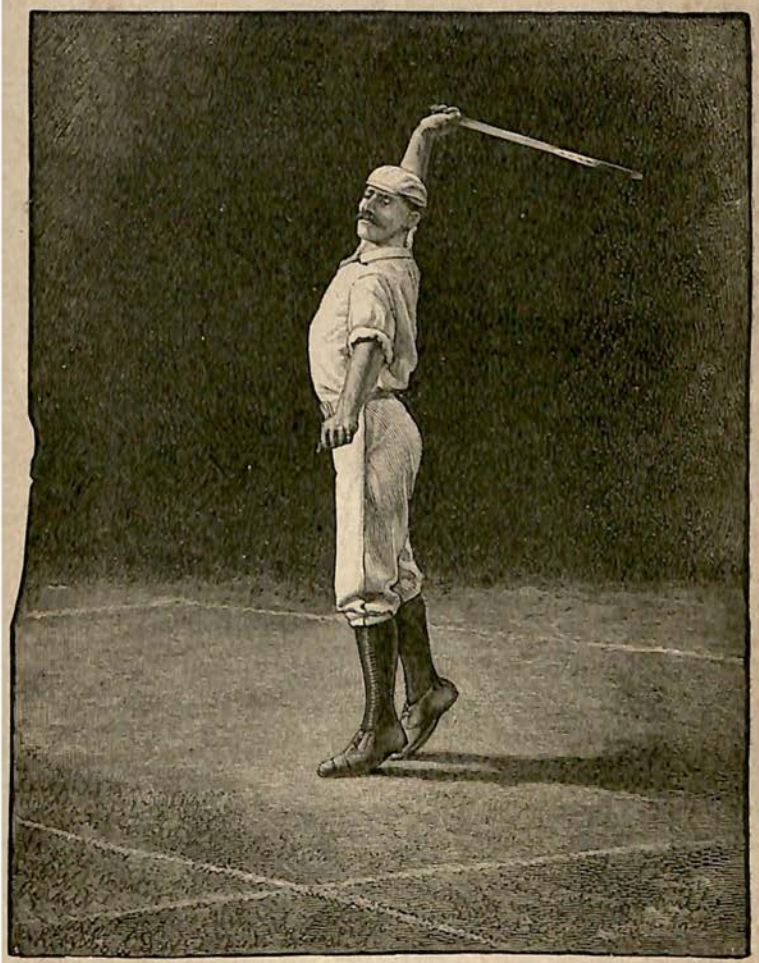
BACK-HAND 'SMASH'

*The Over-hand Volley.*—The position for the over-hand volley is in general close to the net. The arm may be bent at the elbow or fully extended upwards, and any degree of force may be employed, from a very moderate swing to the extent of

letting the arm and the racket go after contact with the ball without any attempt to control either. This latter stroke is called a 'smash,' and is fraught with danger to the unoffending parasols of ladies thirty yards off. The striker occasionally springs completely off the ground, and when the latter is lively the ball can be made to bound over a pavilion at the end of the court. Such violence is seldom necessary, but the appreciation of the spectators generally proves that the brilliancy of the stroke atones for its extravagance. Many balls which do not admit of treatment so contemptuous can be disposed of quite as summarily, but with less expenditure of strength, by the over-hand volley, either in the direction of the side-lines or straight down the court according to circumstances, and when made back-handed a moderate degree of force is advisable as being easier and less dangerous. The precise moment of striking depends on the distance of the striker from the net. When he is close to it he may employ a turn of the wrist to bring the racket more directly down on the ball than when he is further off, but in all cases the weight of the body should be thrown into the stroke by a step forward, with the left foot for the fore-hand, and with the right foot for the back-hand volley. The step forward is not confined to any one species, but is applicable to all alike, though it is more important when force is to be applied than when the racket is only moved gently forward to meet the ball. In most hard over-hand volleys the body and head are both thrown a little back, or even inclined sideways, so that the swing of the body as well as of the racket is thrown into the stroke. The smash is equally applicable to balls off the ground which drop short and bound high, but is hazardous from any position behind the service-line.

*The Horizontal Volley.*—Though the smash is particularly associated in the public mind with the name of Renshaw, it is the horizontal variety which may be more correctly said to be the creation of those gentlemen. The volley from the service-line, which must almost always be made with a horizontal racket, was introduced by them, and, in contrast to the older

practice, is among the most distinguishing features of the lawn tennis of the day. The racket may be at a level much below



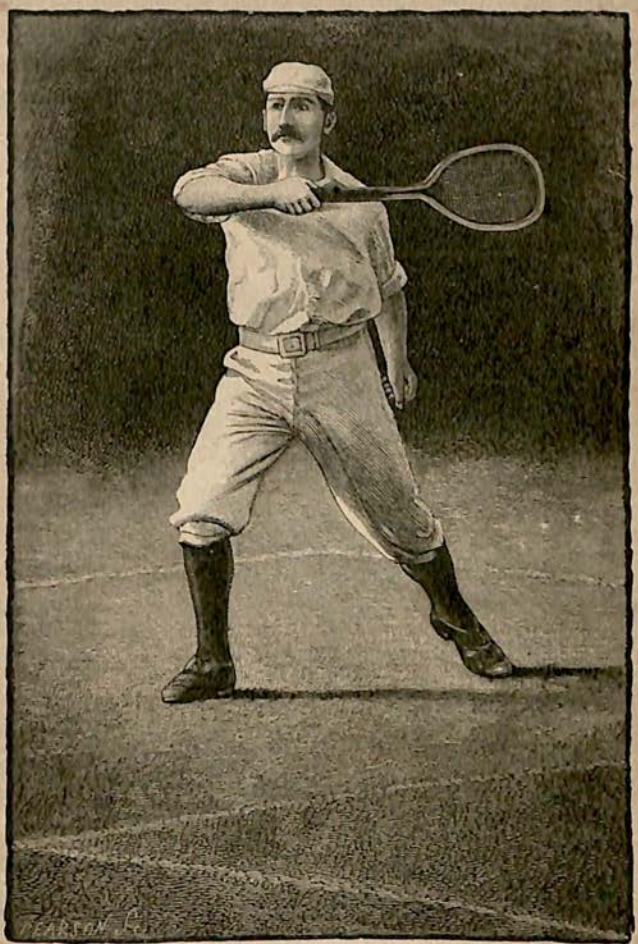
SMASHING A LOB

the shoulder, or even close to the ground, in which case the player must stoop in making the stroke in order to lift it over the net, and will use but little force, though even then the ball

should be hit and not allowed merely to bound off the racket. The head of the latter will be level with or above the elbow in all except very low balls. When the ball is at about the height of the shoulder the elbow, shoulder, and wrist should be free, the arm straightened at the moment of contact, and the racket will generally meet the ball full, though sometimes a little cut may be employed to keep the stroke under complete control, or when the striker is near the net a dexterous turn of the wrist will place it in the exact spot required, whether across the court or otherwise. It is easier to volley such a ball back-hand than fore-hand, and the reach is somewhat longer—a fact worth remembering when trying to pass a volleyer down the side-lines. When a ball comes down the side-lines at about the height of the net, an effective return along the same line may be made without the exertion of any force by bringing the racket out horizontally from the body. This Mr. Wilberforce calls a 'push volley,' and he advises that the wrist be kept stiff. He mentions another variety under the name of the 'drop volley,' made within three yards of the net with a stiff wrist, the blade of the racket being vertical and drawn back just before contact with the ball, which will drop dead just over the net. Those who are familiar with Mr. Chatterton's style of play will know better than from any description how this volley is made. A very telling stroke executed in perfection by Mr. Lewis may be made when near the net by volleying the ball with a turn of the wrist across the court so as to drop near one of the side-lines.

*Drive Volley.*—There is one other description of volley which is at present rarely seen but which may possibly be destined to a career of usefulness hereafter. When a lob is about to drop near the base-line it is now generally returned either by the 'lob volley' mentioned above, which is a defensive stroke, or the player runs back and returns it again with a lob. In either case he sacrifices the attack. There is no reason why such a stroke should not be returned hard by an under-hand volley resembling the drive. The wrist should be kept very

stiff, because otherwise the impact of the ball will force the racket down. With the 'push' and 'drop' varieties it forms

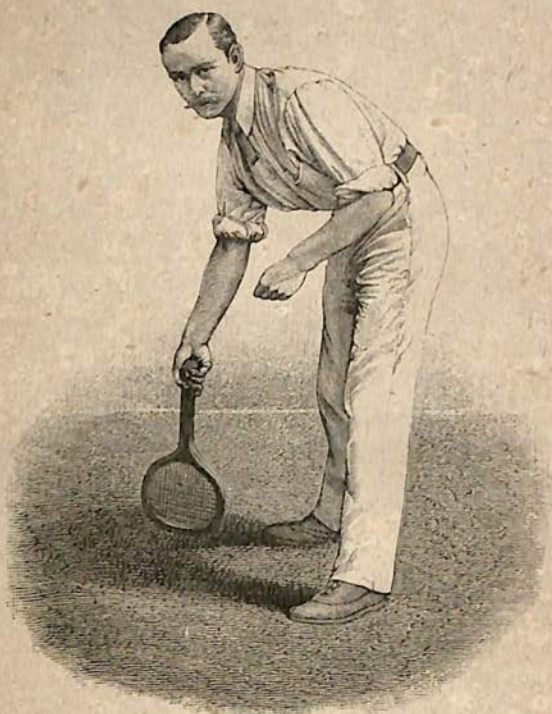


HORIZONTAL VOLLEY

an exception to the general rule as to the employment of the wrist, which in all other volleys is brought largely into play.

*The Half-volley.*—The half-volley is in strictness a stroke

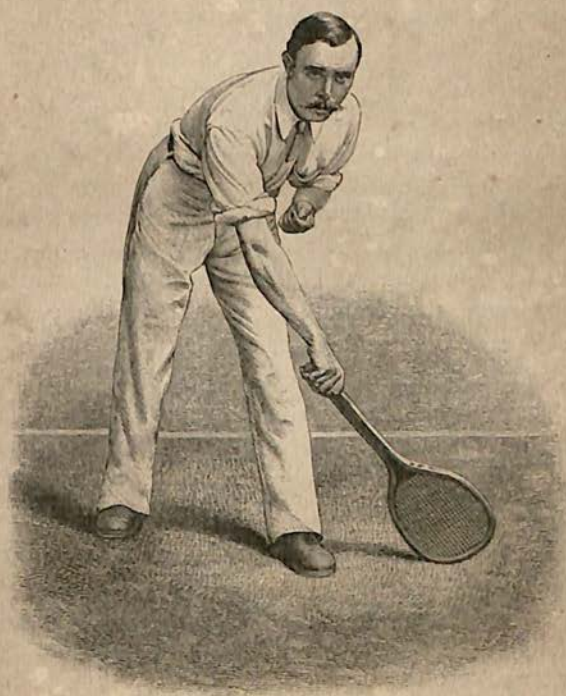
made by taking the ball at the moment when it is leaving the ground after bounding, but all returns made after the bound before a fresh sight has been obtained of the ball are commonly called half-volleys. In neither case are they made by striking at the ball itself, but by a momentary calculation of where it ought to be. It is obvious that such a definition presupposes



FORE-HAND HALF-VOLLEY

a very hazardous stroke. The authorities are unanimous in advising the beginner to omit it altogether from his consideration, and more experienced players to resort to it only when the stroke is otherwise hopeless. In most cases it need not be made at all, a step forward converting it into a volley, while a step or two backward will make possible a far more certain and effective stroke off the ground. Nevertheless it is a very

fascinating resource, and in spite of moralizers will always be popular both with players and spectators. It is generally made with the racket held obliquely and with the arm extended. The further the racket is in advance of the striker, the more will it be inclined at an angle, and, as the ball must be rising at the moment of contact, the higher will be the return. If the



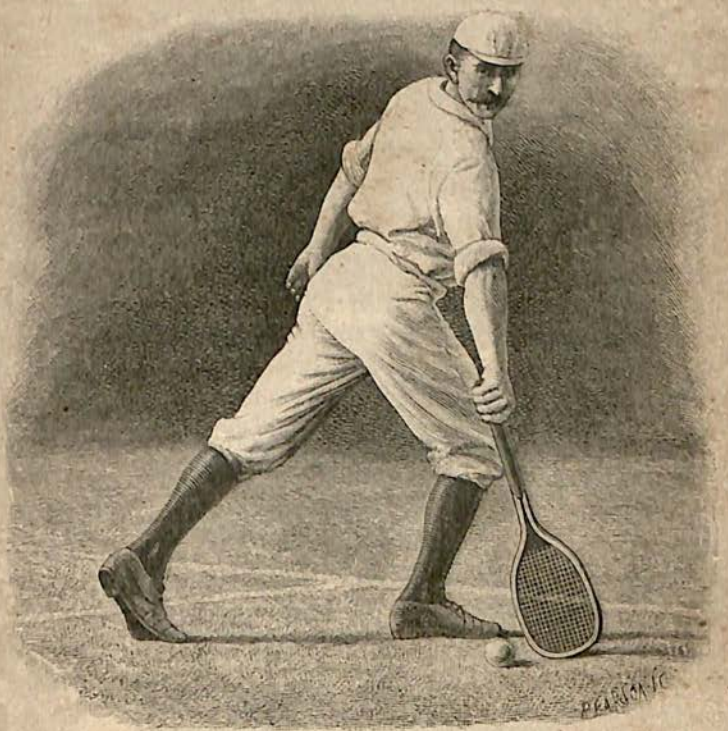
BACK-HAND HALF-VOLLEY

ball is to be kept low, the racket may be turned over so that the upper edge is very slightly inclined towards the net, and the rise of the ball will still give it the necessary elevation. There are occasions, however, when the ball has passed the player. If it has done so to his fore-hand, he must cross the left foot over the right; if to his back-hand, he must swing the right foot across the left and well behind it; and with his back to the

net, and with the racket approaching the vertical according to the distance of the ball, he has a chance of making a 'gallery return.'

*The Lob.*—The last of the methods of lawn tennis, the 'lob, is a ball tossed high in the air, and, if possible, over the opponent's head. It has been, and is, a most unpopular stroke, and has won its way to general acceptance by its unquestioned utility. Its very name seems to have been given to it in derision, for as a 'toss' it was known and tolerated long before it was condemned as a 'lob.' Mr. Hadow had discovered its merits in 1878, and owed his victory over Mr. Gore in great degree to the discovery. It was, however, at that time used only as an antidote to the man at the net, against whom even uncanonical methods might be held legitimate. As play became gradually more severe, it was adopted as a means of gaining time, and the respite being the greater the higher the ball is tossed in the air, the lob rose in altitude in proportion as its rank in reputation. It was soon found that a very high toss is more difficult to volley as well as more easily kept in court, and the additional fact that it is sometimes exceedingly trying to the temper caused its unpopularity to keep pace accurately with the frequency of its occurrence. The sense of the value of the lob has, nevertheless, been continuously on the increase, and there is no doubt at the present time that, not only as an occasional resource, but as an habitual practice, lobbing is an integral part of the game. Against a strong back-player ball after ball is played gently to the back of the court in the hope of wearying the opponent, so that through impatience or exhaustion he may hit the ball out of court or into the net. Whether it be liked or not, the stroke must be recognised, and an answer to it must be found. Let no man, therefore, despise the lob, but let him remember that a short lob is the feeblest of possible strokes, and the most certain to lead to disaster. It is very difficult to volley a lob back-handed with effect; the stroke should, therefore, generally be placed if possible to the opponent's back-hand, but with a strong cross wind it is impossible

to observe this rule implicitly, and the ball must be tossed to the windward side of the court. It may be unchivalrous to lob persistently when the sun is in your opponent's eyes, but if the object is to win a match, even courtesy may be carried too far. When the ball must be returned from about the centre of



BACK-HAND HALF-VOLLEY

the base-line a lob becomes the more useful because from that position it is very difficult to pass the enemy at the net on either side, and many balls which can just be reached, but so as to make a strong return difficult, may be safely lobbed. The worst feature of the stroke is that lobbing is apt to beget lobbing, and a long series of tosses would be wearisome alike

to players and spectators. Still there is no doubt that the resource is now too useful to be excluded, and the delivery of as well as the reply to it must be carefully studied. It may, of course, be lobbed back again, but this involves loss of position, and the better course is to volley moderately hard to the corner, and, if possible, the back-hand corner of the court. In respect alike to the mode of lobbing, the occasion for it, and the answer to it, there is no better model than Mr. E. Renshaw; but the player who shall first succeed in mastering the 'drive volley' above mentioned will not only have secured for himself a great advantage, but will also have dealt a death-blow to lobbing on principle.

Every spectator must have observed that one player will appear to make his strokes with more apparent facility than another; and this comparative absence of effort is frequently attributed to the possession of quickness of eye or activity, and the result is called a graceful style. Grace is, of course, not to be made an object in itself. If studied or self-conscious, it will inevitably degenerate into artificiality or stiffness. To some fortunate individuals it comes unsought; but it depends upon the perception, intuitive or acquired, of the principles upon which strokes ought to be made, rather than upon activity or upon a naturally graceful habit of the body. This perception, from whichever source derived, leads to the acquisition of what is now known as 'good form,' or 'form' simply. This is quite a different thing from style. There are many styles of play: the ball may be taken high or low, with much or with little swing, on the run or stationary; and these differences are attributable to individual peculiarities, the elimination of which with reduction to one uniform and orthodox style, would be disastrous to the interest, the variety, and the beauty of the game. Yet, differing as they do in these respects, all good players display the characteristic known as 'form,' and a few words may be devoted to the explanation of what it is. It is the art of so moving, so carrying the body, and so wielding the racket, as to produce the greatest possible effect with the least possible

waste of force, or, as Dr. Dwight terms it, 'the least friction.'[1] It is possible to make extraordinary strokes from extravagant attitudes, and such *tours de force* are necessary on emergency; but even in such cases the preservation of the balance is important, because it conduces to a quick start after the stroke has been made. Nothing is so destructive of the balance as long strides. With short steps the balance of the body is never lost, and it is much easier to start quickly in a required direction. The player should try, therefore, to keep his feet under him, and when at rest (which he very seldom should be) to divide his weight nearly equally between them, and upon the toes rather than the heels. At the moment of striking the weight is always on the foot which has made the last step. The other foot will sometimes be in the air, but even then it must never appear to be left behind, but be ready either in its turn to become the pivot or to start quickly back again. There should be no useless flourish, and the racket should generally be carried through the stroke without any check at the moment of contact with the ball. The preliminary swing, on the other hand, is more often in excess than in defect of the required amount. These are the principal essentials to good form; some or all of them are exemplified in each of the illustrations appended to this and the preceding chapter, and careful observation of first-rate play will impress their value still more strongly on the mind.

These five strokes—the service, the stroke off the ground, the volley, the half-volley, and the lob—are the weapons in the armoury of the lawn-tennis player. The acquisition of some familiarity with each of them, except the half-volley, should be the first object of the beginner so soon as he has passed from first principles to the study of the game itself. The advanced player, if he aspires to excellence, must seek to make himself master of them all. If he can succeed so far as to hit as hard and as accurately from the base-line as Lawford, place his

[1] 'Form in Lawn Tennis,' *Scribner's Magazine*, Vol. VI. 134. I have freely availed myself of Dr. Dwight's valuable paper in reference to this subject.

hard hits and smash like W. Renshaw, lob as well as E. Renshaw, and volley like E. W. Lewis—especially if to these qualities he can add Hamilton's activity and certainty, he will not only be the best player of his day, but he will also be not far from perfection, so far as we can at present conceive of it. All-round play is the great secret of eminence, and it is because Mr. W. Renshaw combines excellence in all these strokes in a higher degree than anyone else that he has been able to attain and retain so long the first position among lawn-tennis players. It is obvious, however, that such versatility is not to be acquired rapidly. Every player will find that natural aptitude will have a tendency to force him into a certain groove, though this tendency will be strengthened or modified by the habits of those with whom he most frequently plays. He will be by preference a back-player or a volleyer, he will volley from the net or from the service-line, trust much or little to his service, and lob by choice or only on compulsion, according as his own powers or those of his friends may happen to influence him. It is useless to speculate whether good back-play can beat good volleying, or whether the volley from the net is superior to that from the service-line. The time has gone by for such experiments. The discovery that the all-round player is the best player was made by Mr. Hartley in 1883, and the certainty of its truth has been confirmed by the experience of every year. The best advice that can now be given to a player who aspires to the first flight is this: If you are exceptionally strong at the volley, devote yourself for a time in practice almost exclusively to back-play. Should the lob or the service be below the general standard of your play, give especial pains to the acquisition of these strokes. Bring the weakest of them, if possible, up to the level of the strongest, so as to raise them all to a uniform degree of excellence as near to perfection as your powers of body and mind admit.

# CHAPTER XI

## TACTICS OF THE SINGLE GAME

Wisdom and fortune combating together,
If that the former dare but what it can,
No chance may shake it.
SHAKSPEARE, *Ant. and Cleo.* Act iii. sc. 13

EARLY controversialists asserted with much persistency a fancied analogy between lawn tennis and rackets. This must now, at least, be admitted to have been based on a confusion between three things widely different in their nature—viz. principles, methods, and tactics. In its principles lawn tennis is the true child of tennis, bearing but little resemblance to games of another family; and it is distinguished broadly from rackets by the dividing net. In respect of method, however, lawn tennis owes but little to its parent. It is hardly too much to say that a tennis player's first endeavour, if he wish to excel at lawn tennis, should be to unlearn all the traditions of his court. The diagonal racket, the constant injunctions to 'support the head,' the carefully inculcated attitude, must all be discarded as useless if not absolutely hurtful. Even the word 'position' has received a new interpretation: it no longer means the attitude in which the ball can be struck with greatest effect, but the part of the court from which the attack may most effectively be made. As regards method, a resemblance does exist between rackets and lawn tennis, particularly in the manner in which the ball should be struck. In tactics lawn tennis is original; and is little beholden to tennis, rackets, or any other game, except that in four-handed tennis, as in lawn tennis, a stroke straight down the middle of the court between

the two partners is a frequent and effective resource. The tactics of the single game have grown up with its development, and the principles upon which they are founded are the simple result of observation, experience, and common sense. The title prefixed to this chapter might, of course, be held to include the promulgation of an entire code of elaborate instructions as to the employment of the different strokes which have been discussed in that which preceded it. Directions might be given as to the occasions when the stroke should be made down the side-line, and when it should be struck across the court, or as to the advantage in particular circumstances of adopting the drive or the lob. No attempt of this kind will here be made, or, at least, it will be confined within very narrow limits. Such directions may be useful in other games, where the nature of the attack dictates more or less rigidly that of the defence; but in lawn tennis this is not the case. It hardly ever happens that a particular stroke is obviously appropriate to the exclusion of all others. The position of the striker and that of his opponent, the strength or weakness of either, the conditions of weather, wind, and sun, with a host of other considerations, must all be included in the calculation, so that the best tactics are those which may be expected to lead up to a decisive *coup*, and not a succession of strokes which, taken one by one, may be considered to be ideally the best. This view of the meaning of tactics in lawn tennis does not, however, exclude the enunciation of certain principles which are now firmly rooted in the practice of good players. The first of these principles is almost a truism, and will be self-evident to everyone who has seen one or two public matches or good games. It is this: Every player has a favourite spot in the court which represents to him the best 'position,' whether for attack or defence, from which he departs as seldom as possible, and to which he will always return when the exigencies of the game have driven him from it. This spot is not the same for all players. Some will by preference place it on the base-line or behind it; others at or about the service-line, or even

nearer to the net. It is never very far from the half-court line, and may be almost anywhere on it, except that the space between the service- and base-lines is the worst part of the court for all purposes. It follows that one great tactical aim of the player is to secure the position for himself, and to force his opponent from it. To do this he must, so far as possible, play the ball away from the enemy by placing it either across the court to the corners, down the side-line, across the court to the side-lines, or over his rival's head to the base-line. Which of these expedients he will adopt, or whether he will resort to the hazardous experiment of trying to drop the ball close to the net, is a question which no rules will solve, depending, as it does, on the circumstances of the moment.

The habitual position of a player is not, however, that from which he generally delivers the finishing stroke, except when the rest is concluded by a mistake on the part of one or other of the players, or in the case of the consistent back-player who trusts to sheer force and pace alone. Such players are now few in number, and the majority of rests are terminated by a hard volley from the vicinity of the net. It is obvious that the player whose ordinary position is near the service-line has an advantage in this respect over the base-line player, from the shorter distance he will have to cover. The second great tactical principle is, therefore, to manœuvre for the position which will give the first chance of finishing the rest. For this purpose, the opposite player should be kept at or forced to retreat to the base-line; he should be worked from side to side of the court; if he runs up he should be driven back by a lob, and as soon as he has been forced back beyond the base-line, or quite outside of the court, and generally not till then, there is a chance to go up and finish the rest. The great secret of success is not to be in a hurry to run up. Many players, especially service-line volleyers, do so immediately after the delivery of a fast service; but this is open to the objection that such a service puts the server off his balance, and some time is required to get into position after it. Moreover, a fast service

will often be returned at nearly equal speed, and a player running up at once is very apt to be passed. If, however, he should find that he has run up prematurely, let him go back if there is time; if not, he must trust to the chapter of accidents, and to his own quickness and resource. It is a very dangerous experiment to go up after a weak second service; the safer plan is to assume position about a yard behind the base-line, or further back on a hard ground, and to wait for a better opportunity.

To receive the first service, the striker-out should stand with his right foot on an imaginary prolongation of the side-line, much or little behind the base-line, according to the hardness of the ground; a little further to the right in the fore-hand court, to the left in the back-hand court, if the service be delivered from the corner. As the majority of services will come to the back-hand of a player in this position, he is recommended to hold the racket with the back-hand grip. After a fault he will move forward a little into the court, and, as he will have more time for consideration, he can place himself so as to receive the service fore-hand. The return from the right court of the service may be either down the side-line or across the court. If it be the former, the striker-out should generally go up to volley, and if an attempt be made to pass him on his fore-hand he will have the option of volleying across the court, so that the ball may drop as close to the net as possible, or back along the same side-line. If his opponent try to pass him on the other side he will have a similar choice, or if the return be a lob, he should volley it hard into the opposite corner. But the service may have been returned hard across the court, so that the ball has dropped near the side-line, between the service- and base-lines. In this case also the striker-out may follow up his stroke, taking care at the same time to be prepared for the contingency of a lob or of a return along the side-line. The same principles apply to the return of the service from the left court. It is easier to start quickly after receiving than after delivering the service, and the striker-out may, therefore, with less imprudence

than the server, run up to the net ; but if he has made a feeble return he will do better to remain at the back of the court. It

PREPARING TO RECEIVE THE SERVICE

may be worth mentioning that while a weak volley is in most cases a present of the stroke, a gentle cross-volley well placed

near the side-line is as good, and often better, than a hard one down the court. Certain strokes may be placed in a kind of Index Expurgatorius, as altogether unfit for use when there is any alternative. Among these are a gentle return down the middle of the court, a short lob, a weak volley, and any slow ball placed within reach of a volleyer at the net; but a fast ball straight at him is sometimes effective enough, and may be the best way out of a difficulty. If it is a matter of choice whether the attempt to pass a volleyer at the service-line shall be made to his fore-hand or back-hand side, it is worth remembering that it is in general easier to pass him on his fore-hand and by a stroke across the court than by one down the side-lines, but if the player is quite at the back a lob is usually the safer resource.

A considerable part of what may fairly be called tactics has no reference to the use of particular strokes, but relates either to the preliminaries of the match or to the general lines on which it is fought. The best back-play, for instance, is heavily handicapped on a wet court, or if it be otherwise in a bad state; and the all-round player has then the great advantage of being able to accommodate himself to the conditions of the moment. A previous inspection of the ground is a profitable investment of time, to ascertain its peculiarities and any superiority which one end may have over the other. If there be a marked difference between them, the right to change at the prescribed times, instead of at the end of the set, must be claimed before tossing for choice. Otherwise it will be too late to do so, and ends can be changed only in the odd set.

It is not, however, always to his interest to change. Of two players, the one who thinks himself the better should make the claim, and he who thinks himself the worse should abstain from it. The former should, as far as possible, exclude luck, the latter should embrace every chance of getting it on his side. In a good court the position of the sun and the direction of the wind ought to be the main considerations affecting choice, but the nature of the background may make one end better than the other; and service being now generally regarded as

no advantage between equal players, the winner of the toss should choose the best end, taking note in doing so not only of the position of the sun at the moment, but of what it will be in the course of the match. So long as the players were allowed to change sides *every* game, the advantage of winning the toss was reduced to a *minimum*, and the arrangement of the service, which was necessarily delivered from the same side throughout, became of greater importance. Ingenious devices were therefore resorted to by the winner of the toss to secure the delivery of the service from such court as might seem to be to his interest; but the loser of the toss could dictate the end from which the service should come, and on this account it was often a positive disadvantage to win the toss. This defect is now remedied by requiring the change to be made, if at all, after 'the first, third, and every subsequent alternate game of a set,' so that service is delivered about equally from either end. Moreover, the winner of the toss can now compel his opponent to make the first choice. Something may be learned of the enemy's play beforehand, and something also picked up in the course of the preliminary 'knock-up.' When playing against a strong antagonist, and especially in a handicap, the weaker should play a hard, fast game. Some luck is sure to fall to his share, and, at all events, a weak game is of no use against such an opponent. The latter will be compelled to play a quieter game than usual if he has to concede long odds, and must, therefore, also give many opportunities to kill the ball. With this exception a man should endeavour to play his usual game in a five-set match, and to maintain it steadily from the beginning to the end. He will want all the endurance he possesses, and many matches have been lost, and still more jeopardized, by an initial effort too great to be sustained. On a similar principle it is unwise for a player to drop his game, unless it be absolutely necessary to do so. It is proverbially difficult to pick up a dropped game, and the increased confidence derived from temporary success will sometimes make it impossible. It may, of course, occasionally be judicious to let a set go when victory is

hopeless, but this course should be resorted to but rarely and with extreme caution. In a three-set match it is allowable to play a faster game, the effort being proportioned to its duration.

It is not the usual practice of lawn-tennis players to submit to strict training. After the season has commenced few of the regular match-players have much chance of being otherwise than fairly fit for hard work. Some players do more in the way of preparation than others. Mr. E. Renshaw is supposed to do rather less, yet no one has exhibited more wonderful proofs of endurance; but his practice in this respect will not be safely imitated by everyone. Those who have not yet fully gauged their own powers will do well to remember that a tournament extending over several days, on each of which it is possible that five advantage-sets may be played, is one of the severest tests of constitutional soundness and physical strength to which men have ever voluntarily subjected themselves in the pursuit of a game. It must tax the strongest man severely, and the apparent inequalities of form exhibited by the same player on successive days, as well as the startling changes of fortune which the course of a single match will sometimes display, are in great measure attributable to the severity of the exertion. The most experienced players find it occasionally necessary to allow a set to go by default, in order to secure a short breathing-space or to restore their temporarily exhausted energy; and they have done this though it is notorious how hard it is to recover a dropped standard of play, and how dangerous it always is to give to an antagonist any encouragement. Still more in accordance with sound policy is it occasionally to leave alone a stroke which can only be returned by a violent effort, and then only by so feeble a return as to leave no hope that the next will not be decisive. In such a case success may cost more than the stroke is worth, and it may be prudent to let the ball alone altogether. Nevertheless, the fact that strokes, games, and sets are sometimes discreetly allowed to go by default, is a proof that a long and hard match is no child's play, and that want of condition will show its results at an early stage.

But when the last word has been said on the subject of skill, judgment, and endurance, moral qualities must still be admitted to have a determining influence upon the issue. Of these a player will find confidence in himself to be one of the most important. There are few games in which the form of players varies so much from day to day. One who has been seen playing brilliantly on one occasion, will within a day or two perhaps display a very moderate exhibition of skill. A piece of bad luck will in one case discourage effort, in another it will intensify the determination to win in spite of it. Temperament has much to do with these inequalities. One man can play his best when he has slightly the best of the handicap; another requires a shade of odds against him to draw out his powers to the utmost. A singular instance of this idiosyncrasy occurred at Cannes early in 1886. Each of two well-known players, Mr. R. D. Sears, the American champion, and Mr. W. C. Taylor, believed that he could give the other odds. Two matches were played, each alternately giving the other half-fifteen, with the curious result that in both cases the giver of the odds won the match; but it is clear that neither player can have displayed his true form in both matches. In addition to such oscillations as these, it is the fact that no game is more trying to the temper than lawn tennis, and in none is the loss of it more apparent to the spectators or more disastrous to the individual. In cricket, the bowler may free his mind by unusual pace in the next ball, or the batsman may play the part of Achilles in the pavilion for half a day without attracting special notice; but unnecessary violence, apathy, or petulance in a lawn-tennis player is visible to everyone, and many times important matches have been lost by the not unnatural impatience caused by an egregious piece of bad luck or an erroneous decision. Such accidents are bound to occur, and should be discounted beforehand. The cultivation of an even temper and a fixed determination not to be put out are among the most important elements of success.

# CHAPTER XII

## THE FOUR-HANDED OR DOUBLE GAME

BY H. W. WILBERFORCE[1]

When such a mutual pair
And such a twain can do 't, . . . We stand up peerless.
SHAKSPEARE, *Ant. and Cleo.* Act i. sc. 1

THE double and single games are in many respects essentially dissimilar; the mental and physical qualities they require, the species of skill they call for, differ very considerably, and in consequence there are to be found both among players and spectators advocates of the superior merits of either game. Of course there is much to be said on both sides. The double game undoubtedly requires less exertion: a closely contested single will tax to the full the energies of the strongest man: in fact, in the fifth set of a hard match both players are often on the verge of exhaustion, and will be unable to play within fifteen, or even thirty, of the form they showed to start with. Personally, I speak with some feeling in this matter, because, having played in a good number of matches in the past ten years, I have only twice succeeded in winning when all five sets were played, and on one of those occasions I should infallibly have been beaten had not rain intervened and caused the last set to be postponed to the next day. The disadvantages of the comparative violence of the single game become more apparent

[1] Mr. Wilberforce has already written at length on the subject of Lawn Tennis, and on certain points is here necessarily retracing ground which he has already covered. It was felt, however, that a chapter by so well-known and accomplished an authority would add greatly to the value of this volume, and he very kindly fulfilled the request to write it.—ED.

with increasing years, when the prospect of racing backwards and forwards across the court no longer attracts, and many are the men whom the sedate joys of the double game have alone deterred from deserting lawn tennis and launching on the still more placid waters of golf. On the other hand, there are many men too who must have hard exercise—some because they like it, some because it is good for them: they prefer singles. The feeling of emulation, besides, is much stronger in the latter game: if you win you feel it is entirely your own doing, and the credit, such as it is, is yours alone, and so far you are a better man than your opponent; whereas if you have a partner the honours are divided; perhaps he and other people may even think and say you owe the victory to him. Odious thought! and of course how untrue!

Again, the double game consists nearly entirely of volleying, and the play is therefore much faster (though no doubt less accurate) than in a single. Another result is that the rests are shorter. I may mention in this connection that the longest rest on record in a double match, as far as I know (it occurred at Liverpool in 1884), consisted of no fewer than thirty-eight volleys; this, however, is quite out of the common, the rests being, as I have said, very short, not unusually finishing in two or three strokes. Then, where four players are engaged there must be more variety than where there are only two. This, I think, is a great charm. To watch a combined plan of attack developing, to notice the different ideas each player has of what will best conduce to the common end, and their separate ways of getting out of a difficulty or securing a stroke just at the right moment, to see the ball whizzing to and fro in the short space which divides four men all close to the net—these things give the double game a kind of excitement which, to my mind, is lacking in the single game.

Do not let me be misunderstood. I do not for a moment say that the single game is not exciting: far from it. For instance, during the match for the Allcomers' Prize in 1889, between Mr. W. Renshaw and Mr. Barlow, the excitement was at times

almost painful in its intensity. But it is of a different nature. Although the burden of the play has, so to speak, a more confined scope, so that it must rest on one of the two players, and there are fewer surprises, yet there is much more continuity about the game : a player can work out his scheme with more confidence, knowing that there is no chance of its being marred by an enemy at home. To borrow a political simile, there is less opportunism. But then there is another thing which makes the double game so taking to the eye; the half-volley, the prettiest stroke in lawn tennis, as it has been truly termed, in the single game generally imprudent and generally unsuccessful, is in the double game not only upon occasion an indispensable weapon of defence, but also not infrequently the right stroke to play to win the rest. And this brings me to another point : the play is or may be of a more delicate nature. There are opportunities in the double game, where one man at least is always near the net, for gentle drop-strokes and little cross-volleys, which are rarely possible in a single game, and still more rarely advisable.

In spite of all this, I am forced to admit the standard of double play is far lower than that of single play; but I will not admit that it is the fault of the game. On the contrary, I believe there are great possibilities in it, but whether they will be realized must depend on the players themselves. At present much more importance is attached to the single game. It is a far higher achievement, for example, to win the Single Championship than the Four-handed Championship, and as it is very bad practice for singles to play doubles, it follows that the double game goes to the wall. Now, at the Universities, and especially at Cambridge, men play fours pretty often; and what is the result? Why, they not only take a very much higher place relatively in doubles, but it often happens that a University pair will beat two players who are very greatly their superiors single-handed. The moral of this is that combination is essential, and cannot be obtained without constant practice. A player must study his partner as he would a problem in Euclid, and, as he may sometimes find him in-

capable of solution, it is perhaps not surprising that most people prefer the easier method of rule of thumb. Take for instance the present four-handed champions, the Messrs. Renshaw. They have been beaten, I think, only five times in the last eight or ten years, and they play together perhaps two or three times a year. How they play in singles is known to everyone. When they play together what do we see? Many strokes, of course, of the utmost brilliancy, but many strokes lost simply through want of united play; balls passing between them which neither try for; balls which they both try for, and therefore miss; balls taken by one which could evidently be far better played by the other. I do feel very strongly that we are entitled to expect something better than this; but whether we shall get it or not is, of course, a very different matter.

However, to turn to less controversial topics, there is not now much difference of opinion as to how the game ought to be played. There may still lurk in remote country parsonages some remains of the idea that one partner should volley and the other play at the back of the court; and in exceptional cases such a plan may succeed if there is a very fine back player on one side, and two comparatively indifferent volleyers on the other. But under ordinary circumstances the back player is at such a disadvantage, and his share of the work is consequently so great—for, of course, the balls are sent almost exclusively to him—that his task is practically hopeless. He has to defend not only the whole of his side of the court, but also a great portion of the back part of his partner's side; it is very difficult for him to pass either of his opponents, as they can cover nearly the entire breadth of the court; the distance the ball has to travel from him to them gives them time to get comfortably into position to receive the stroke, and, finally, unless he hits every ball hard and low he might just as well send it into the net or out of the court. These facts are now so generally recognised that it seems unnecessary to say anything more on the subject. The service is a great advantage

in a double game; in a single it is not at all uncommon for a player, if he has the choice, to refuse to serve, but in doubles the service generally gives the command in a rest: indeed, a close match frequently resolves itself into a struggle to win the opponent's service game in the last set, and this once done, the lead is maintained to the end.

It is difficult to lay down any general rule as to where the server should stand: a very convenient position is half-way between the middle- and side-lines, as that does not give the opponent any indication of where the service is coming to. The direction of the service should not always be the same, unless it happens that the opponent is decidedly weaker in one place than in another. For instance, if he has a poor back-hand stroke, naturally the service will be comparatively often in that direction; but it may be borne in mind that a service to the far corner from where the server stands will leave the striker-out a very small part of the court into which he can safely return the ball. These remarks are intended to apply both to first and second services, though if a man has a very fast service he can afford to disregard direction in a great measure: on the other hand, with a slow or second service, it is important to try and pitch the ball as near the service-line as is consistent with avoiding that piece of carelessness so aggravating to one's partner—a second fault.

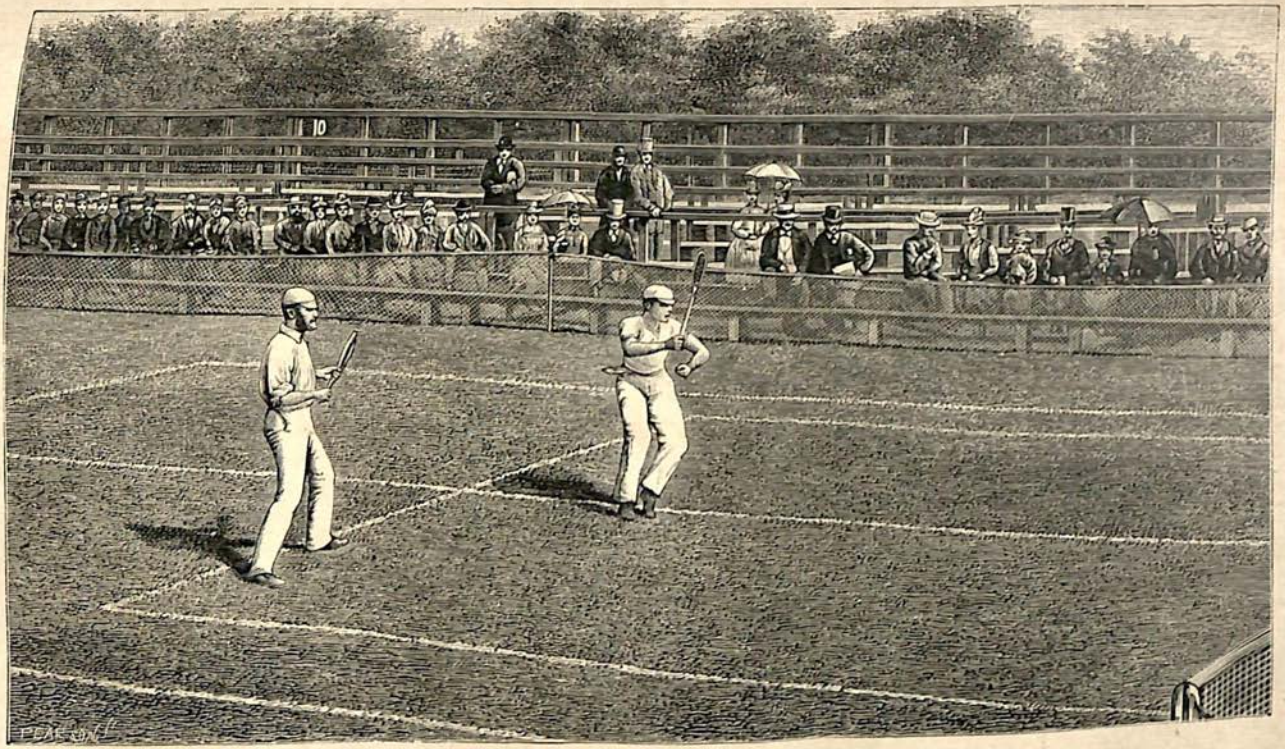
The server should, where practicable, run up close to the net after his service so as to volley the return, which will generally be to him. I say where practicable, because it may be that after a fast service he will be off his balance, and not able to start in time to be in position before his opponent strikes the ball, in which case, if he were to run up, he would probably find himself in the unfortunate plight of running one way while the ball was travelling another. Or, again, he may have thought the service was going to be a fault, and for that reason not have started. In these cases he must be content to play a defensive game, and retire about a yard behind the back-line, running in on the first opportunity. If, however, he

can safely follow up his service, about two yards inside the service-line, and rather nearer the side-line than the middle-line, is a good place to get to. If he goes nearer the net he gives his opponent a chance of an easy lob over his head, and if he is further off he may have the ball dropped at his toes or be passed on the side remote from his partner. Supposing him, then, to be in the position I have suggested, and in the right-hand court, if the ball is well returned to him—that is to say, not a high, easy return which he can kill by an ordinary hard stroke in almost any direction—he will probably have three strokes open to him: either down the middle of the court, or to his right, or to his left. A very low ball on his fore-hand is, I think, best returned across the court to the side-line, at an acuter angle to the net than that at which it came. This stroke often succeeds in passing the striker-out, and, even if it does not, is at any rate very safe, and involves hardly any risk—I mean, if properly played. A low ball on the back-hand is very difficult to deal with in this way, and requires a sort of push; the ordinary stroke is down the middle of the court. A ball about the height of the net on the fore-hand may sometimes be returned down the line past the striker-out's partner. If the server is in the left-hand court, fore-hand must be substituted for back-hand, and *vice versâ*, in the above remarks.

The server's partner should stand a couple of feet inside the service-line, and sufficiently close to his side-line to prevent himself being passed down it, this latter requisite being particularly important. He should carefully watch the service so as to form some idea of where the return will come, and if the first service be good, he may approach a little nearer still to the net, because the nearer the net he is the harder he can volley. If the service is returned by a lob over the server's head, I think, on the balance of convenience, his partner should run back and take it. When the server is volleying on the offensive, his partner may safely be as close as he is to the net, or even closer; but if he is on the defensive, his partner had

better fall back, say, to the service-line, as that position will give more time to prepare to receive a fast stroke, and reduces the chances of being taken unawares.

The position of the striker-out must depend very much on the service. To take the first service, the usual position is about a yard outside the back-line. I think this is the furthest distance off anybody ever stands, even on a fast ground. It is much better to be too far off than too close in, as it is so much easier to run forward than backward, and when running forward the motion of the body lends force to the stroke. When the service comes from the extreme corner of the opposite court, the striker-out may have to stand some little way outside his side-line; but it is difficult to dogmatize about this, as it by no means follows that the service will come into the corner of the service court. The striker-out must form his own opinion from the direction of the server's eyes where the ball is likely to come, and place himself accordingly, always bearing in mind that he is probably neither so safe nor so severe with his back-hand as with his fore-hand. In case the service is very fast, it is more prudent not to attempt to make a stroke of it, but to be content with returning it so that it cannot be volleyed, or at any rate killed by a volley. If the server has not got up to the net no difficulty presents itself; but if he has, the striker-out may succeed in crossing him by a ball to the side-line, or may lob; if he lobs, a lob over the head of the server's partner is, I think, preferable. If he is successful in preventing his return from being volleyed, or if it is volleyed to his partner, he should run up to the net; how near must depend on circumstances—the nature of his return, and so on. So much for the first service. To take the second service, he should stand two or three yards behind the service-line, and, as the service must be rather slow, he may safely be some way to the left of the middle of his court, so as to take the stroke fore-handed. It will be understood that I am here speaking of playing to win, not playing to learn. If a man is trying to learn the game he ought, no doubt, to try to take



THE FOUR-HANDED GAME

strokes on the back-hand rather than the fore-hand. There are many different ways of returning the second service, and it is a good thing not to play the same stroke too often, so that the opponent may be kept in a state of uncertainty as much as possible. It should also be remembered that a very easy second service ought to lose the server the rest sooner or later, and that therefore it is a pity to hazard too much by trying a difficult stroke, when the same end may almost certainly be obtained by two or three much easier strokes. In discussing the following returns I assume that the server has followed up his service as suggested above.

1. *Across the court.*—This may be either fast or slow; the fast stroke on the fore-hand from the fore-hand court is very common. It is fairly safe, being difficult to volley effectively, and, when at a sufficiently acute angle to the net, may pass the server altogether. The slow stroke is best back-handed from the back-hand court; it must drop close to the net, and is only advisable when the server has not gone in very near. It is then one of the most deadly strokes I know.

2. *Down the middle of the court*, either back-hand from the fore-hand court or fore-hand from the back-hand court; if done in any other way it is decidedly risky. Generally either of the opponents could very well take the stroke, but what constantly happens is that one man makes a movement towards the ball, changes his mind and does not try it, while his partner, being misled by the movement, does not try it either, and the ball sails by untouched. Or, again, they both leap at it, their rackets clash, and the ball goes into the net.

3. *Down the side-line.*—Far and away the best mode of doing this is fore-handed from the back-hand court. It is not a very easy stroke, but is rapidly becoming more common, and is very difficult to take even if it is not out of the opponent's reach altogether. The fore-hand stroke from the fore-hand court is not to be recommended unless there is a distinct gap between the opponent and his side-line.

After all these strokes the player should come up closer to the net, and, in fact, unless he has planted himself for a very hard stroke, he will strike in the act of running. But he must be careful not to leave his side-line exposed, especially after he has himself placed a ball down the line.

I do not pretend to have given anything like an exhaustive list of returns of the service, but I believe all the more important ones will be found under one of the three heads mentioned above.

About the striker-out's partner it is unnecessary to say much: he may stand anywhere from a yard behind the service-line to a yard in front of it, so long as he is close enough to the net when the time comes for him to take a stroke.

As to the play generally, it is safer to place down the middle of the court than down the side-lines. A side-line stroke, unless exactly in the right spot, may be volleyed either straight back in the direction from which it came, with great effect (and this is a useful answer to many strokes), or else hard across the court, to the great discomfiture of the original striker's partner. If either player has sent a high weak return which is in danger of being 'smashed,' both he and his partner should make the best of their way to the back-line; it is very little use remaining up on the chance of half-volleying the return, which is about the only other possible course. Never give the opponent a chance of volleying either point-blank or from above the net; always make him lift his volleys if possible. If one of the opponents is weaker than the other, he should be 'pilled' persistently, and the difficult shots reserved for his partner. A man can always play better after a stroke or two—he gets his eye in; consequently, if a player finds he is not getting much change out of one of his opponents, he should suddenly attack the other, and may very likely catch him napping. It often happens that a ball is just as much one man's as the other's, and the question arises who is to take it. The common practice is for that man to take it who has played the last stroke; for not only is his eye in, as I have said, but he probably had some

object in his last stroke : it was, no doubt, part of some plan of attack, into which his partner would have come as a comparative stranger. For instance, sometimes a player cannot place a volley past either of his opponents at the first attempt. So he tries to coax one of them nearer to the line by playing in that direction, and then he gets his chance. Now under these circumstances it is better for the original player to go a little beyond his strict rights, and put the finishing touch to his scheme, than to let his partner make some ordinary stroke without relation to those that have gone before. But, except in cases of this sort, a player should be very chary of invading his partner's domain ; it is extremely disconcerting for his partner to see him jumping about in front of him, and not to know in the least what ball he may be expected to take at any moment. Such conduct makes a good partner play badly, and a bad partner play worse, as he loses the little confidence he had in himself to start with. A greater mistake still is blowing a man up for making a bad stroke ; every man presumably plays his best, and to rate him for not doing better makes him at once nervous and irritated.

I have already said, and then it was a truism, that combination is the all-important thing in a double game. Here, as in most other pursuits, a selfish fellow is a great bore ; he is always wanting to distinguish himself, trying for brilliant and impossible shots, and attempting to score off easy balls in a showy way. Perhaps he does not realize that he is entirely spoiling his partner's play and losing the game into the bargain, but so it is. If he would only learn to play in a quiet and unostentatious way, and not take more than his share of the plums, what a comfort it would be ! A great deal of the most useful play, it may be remarked, does not show itself to anyone except the opponents, and therefore meets with insufficient appreciation. For instance, one partner has to go out to one side for a ball and so leaves a space between himself and his partner : the other promptly backs him up, and the opponent has to place the ball elsewhere ; no one sees this but the men on the

other side ; yet it is a stroke saved. In cases of this kind a man has to console himself with the feeling of duty fulfilled, and the lurking sense of satisfaction caused by having divined and frustrated the intention of his opponents.

Hitherto I have been dealing exclusively with the four-handed game as played by men. It is necessary to say something of ladies and gentlemen's doubles, partly because a championship match has recently been instituted in this department of the game, partly because such matches now form an important element in every lawn-tennis meeting, but especially because it is to this form of the game of lawn tennis that its general popularity is principally owing, and yet it is a subject upon which it is almost impossible usefully to say much. In truth, mixed pairs, as they are often called, are in many cases only an excuse for garden-parties and a vehicle for conversation, the nature and quality of the play being a matter of secondary if any importance; and as these latter are the only points which a mere player can legitimately touch upon it follows that the interest his criticism excites is somewhat limited. It may be that things are better as they are: I do not myself see how this style of game could become satisfactory, from a player's point of view, without an alteration in the feminine costume, which would be unlikely, to say the least of it, to meet with general approval. Anything approaching to activity is out of the question with a lady, even if desirable no one ever saw a lady 'smash' a ball; few, if any, ladies can volley with effect, and the efforts of most to take a back-hander result in nothing better than a graceful scoop. I am bound to say, also, though in fear and trembling, that lady players, as a rule, are greatly wanting in judgment; they seldom look beyond the particular stroke they are playing; if there happens to be one stroke at which they excel, they are far too apt to play it in season and out of season, regardless of whether their opponents are perfectly prepared to take it or not. They do not seem to realize that the effectiveness of a stroke depends not only on the absolute nature of the stroke itself, but also, if not

mainly, on the occasion on which it is exhibited—that what may at one time be a very good stroke, which will probably win the rest, may at another time be a very bad one, which will probably entail defeat. Or, again, many ladies return ordinary straightforward strokes with ease and certainty, but give them a ball which bounds high into the air, such as a high twisted under-hand service, and they quite lose their heads; instead of biding their time and playing quietly, they either make a wild swoop and send the ball miles out of court, perhaps with both hands on the racket, or else allow it to bound into them.

These things make ladies and gentlemen's matches very much a matter of chance and uncertainty. Besides, even when really good lady players are engaged, the game must resolve itself into a perpetual attempt on the part of each man to keep the ball at the lady opponent, and out of the way of the other man. In some of the best matches one sees long rests in which the ladies are hitting hard at each other from the back of the court, and the men standing, or rather jumping about near the net in the hope of a chance of cutting-in and volleying; of course as soon as they succeed in doing so the rest is at an end. I remember that in early days the tactics of placing the balls at the lady used to rouse great indignation; and once, after my partner and I had won a match in this way, the man on the other side came up to me in a great state of heat (more mental than physical, as he had had very little to do) and said, 'That sort of thing would never have been allowed at Wimbledon,' which was true, though not for the reason he supposed, but because mixed pairs have not as yet been played there. Still, however, those ladies who are not prevented from playing in tournaments by the publicity and excitement, do give an immense amount of pleasure to the spectators, and the largest crowd is nearly always to be found round the court where ladies are engaged.

In playing a match, the lady ought, I am persuaded, to play in the right-hand court: it is the easier court of the two

to play out of, there are fewer back-hand strokes to be taken, and the favourite stroke of most ladies, and one which some do far better than the majority of men, is the fore-hand drive across the court. Few ladies, too, can make the fore-hand stroke along their back-hand line, which is the best off-the-ground stroke of its kind out of the back-hand court; and, besides, it has always seemed to me that the better volleyer of a pair should play in the back-hand court.

Where there is the choice, the service should be taken, as the lady on the other side may not unreasonably be expected to miss a fast service or two, even if she is not to be puzzled by under-hand twisted services. If these latter are employed they should be back-hand from the right court, and fore-hand from the left, always being placed in the extreme opposite corner so as to drive the striker-out as far out of the court as possible. If this is done the next return may very probably be placed between the two opponents and out of reach of either of them. The man should of course serve first; while he is serving his partner should stand at the left-hand end of the back-line, or even a little behind it; if the service is from the left court the position would be about two yards from the right-hand corner. Many ladies insist upon standing half-way between the back- and service-lines. This, I do not hesitate to say, is the very worst place in the whole court to stand in, combining the maximum of disadvantage with the minimum of advantage. It would be unwise for the man to run up after his service unless it was to his lady opponent; as if he attempts to cover the whole court he is pretty certain to be passed, and if he merely keeps his own side he leaves his partner to do all the work at the back of the court. Far his best plan is to stay on the back-line and try to take any ball that is not too glaringly his partner's. Of course where the lady is that *rara avis* a volleyer, and stands up at the net, the above remarks do not apply, and the game is played to that extent like an ordinary double game. Similarly, while the lady is serving, her partner should be at the back of the court unless the service is either a

really fast one or served to the lady opponent. The immense majority of ladies serve more or less slowly under-hand, and it cannot be said that any other sort of service is particularly graceful or particularly effective. I, for one, strongly counsel them to be content with serving under-hand with moderate pace and good length, and not to attempt what too often proves a mere caricature of a man's service. The position of the striker-out is the same as in a double game, and after the return the man generally runs in; but the lady should at once return to the back-line, which, indeed, ought to be her most permanent place of abode throughout the game.

The partner of the striker-out should also be at the back of the court.

Whenever the man is at the back, he must of course be prepared to run in and volley when an opportunity offers, which will constantly be the case: the value of judicious running-up cannot easily be exaggerated. I have already said, the lady being the weak point, the play should be directed at her, and advantage taken of all the respects in which she is inferior, from a lawn-tennis point of view, to a man. For instance, as she is comparatively slow about the court, drop strokes are very useful against her, especially in the return of the service; and it often happens that after one or two of these her partner will be tempted from his position to come to her assistance and may fall an easy victim to a ball down his own line. In mixed pairs a man will commonly have a good many balls to 'smash.' The usual plan is to hit straight down the court, which gives a chance, although a slender one, to one of the opponents to return it by great agility. If the ball is smashed from left to right on to the side-line close to the net, it becomes practically impossible to return it, principally on account of its unexpected direction, the natural instinct of the opponent being to run the other way.

Many strokes are lost in mixed pairs by both parties finding themselves on the same side of the court, leaving the whole of the other side exposed. To prevent this happening, of course

some arrangement is necessary as to what is to be done when one partner is compelled temporarily to leave his side. For my own part, I infinitely prefer that each partner should return to his side in both forms of the double game; the disadvantage of the other plan—changing sides—is that one is sometimes quite unable to tell whether one's partner has crossed over so far that he intends to stay there, or whether he intends to return.

We hear a good deal said about 'poaching': it is a common subject of complaint that men take too much upon them, and that the ladies are left without any chance of playing except where there are balls which it is impossible for their partners to take. No doubt there is some ground for this feeling; we all see occasionally some very indifferent male player completely spoiling a game by perpetually rushing in front of his partner and usurping strokes which she could have dealt with more effectually. Such a one and his practices are rightly condemned. This state of things is, however, quite the exception. Ordinarily speaking, the man is considerably the better player of the two, and it would be wrong, it would be bad strategy for him to allow his partner to take strokes which, if the players were more evenly matched, she might fairly consider as hers. It is impossible to lay down any general rule which shall apply to all cases. But two things may be usefully remembered: first, that no man can play a single game in a double court; and, second, that a competent partner may be turned into a very bad one by an exhibition of distrust in her.

It may be, and sometimes is said, what a dull time ladies would have if they played like that! They are to be allowed to take hardly any balls at all, and to be always trotting up and down the base-line. To this I reply that it all depends upon what the pleasure of playing consists in. If in simply hitting a ball over a net, no doubt the system I am advocating is wrong, and each partner should endeavour to take as many balls as he or she can reach, regardless of what happens to the partnership; but if the sole object is not to shine oneself—if it is

sought to play a winning game, even if one is to bear only a subordinate part in it ; if the intellect as well as the body is to join in the struggle--then I maintain that a more real and a higher enjoyment is to be experienced by pursuing the mode of play I have roughly shadowed forth.

## CHAPTER XIII

### MATCH-PLAYING

BY H. F. LAWFORD

> Honour travels in a strait so narrow,
> Where one but goes abreast.
> SHAKSPEARE, *Troilus and Cressida*, Act iii. sc. 3

THE majority of those who play lawn tennis will wonder, on seeing the title of this chapter, what there is to say about playing matches that is not already said in the preceding chapters on the game. The small minority, however, who have engaged in important contests before thousands of critical spectators will well understand that playing a *match* is a totally different matter to having a friendly *game*, however keenly the latter may be fought out. I am fully alive to the difficulties of saying anything new about a game as to which there has been so much written, and I feel more competent even now, with my lawn-tennis powers fast waning, to play *the* Championship match than to write the few pages I have been asked to do. There are many of the best players of the day who play up just as well, and exhaust themselves every whit as much, as far as bodily strength is concerned, over a friendly game with some rival of about equal skill as they ever do in a public match; but there is one great element which the friendly game lacks—one, too, that plays an important part in the public trial—and that is the mental strain, which is inevitable over a closely contested match. Some men feel this strain so much more than others, that it is not uncommon to find a man getting a little the best of the contests with an opponent almost

always in practice, and yet going down before the same player if they chance to meet in a tournament; it does not mean that he is an inferior player, but simply that his nervous system is not so well organized. This weakness can be overcome to a great extent by habitually playing matches, but it is never entirely removed; and there are men whose merits as players should place them in a higher rank than they will ever attain to had they no nerves. I have watched most games, and I think that the foregoing remarks apply to lawn tennis more than any one of them, except perhaps billiards. One great difference between playing a game at lawn tennis and playing a match is that, as a rule, in the former a man plays for the stroke he knows he ought to *try* for, whereas in the latter he plays for what he thinks he *can* do. This again applies equally to billiards; if a man always plays a game as if he were playing a match he will probably cease to improve—he does not 'go out' enough for strokes.

One is often disappointed at seeing a somewhat tame match between two good players perhaps not of front rank; the play is good and very steady, but a want of dash spoils the effect to the 'gallery.' This arises from the fact that the players are not sufficiently sure of their brilliant strokes, though they are known to be capable of such in practice, and therefore prefer to trust to gaining each ace by their opponent's mistake rather than by a good stroke on their part.

Between two *quite* first-class men, on the other hand, a tame match is rarely seen; severity and brilliancy may generally be looked on as a certainty, as they are each alive to the powers of their rival, and know that nothing but fine play will win, so that in always trying for more difficult strokes than their fellows of a lower grade, they often seem to the uninitiated spectator to play worse, and make more mistakes.

In the last ten years the game of lawn tennis has completely changed; in 1880 an active man with a good eye, capable of enduring great fatigue, and who could merely *return* most balls into his opponent's court with certainty, both fore-hand and

back-hand, was sure to take high rank. This is no longer the case, and let us be thankful it is not ; now, unless a player can make brilliant strokes, strokes just skimming the net, into the far corners of his rival's court, he is nowhere ; the old game of hammer and tongs, long wearisome rests of everlasting sameness, is over, and we have in its place a game of infinite variety, and enough bodily exercise to satisfy anyone ; in fact, all the best players unite in saying that the pace of the present game renders a match more severe now than it ever was in the days of long rests and three-hour contests ; whereas now, about two hours is a long time for a first-class match to last. If we hear nowadays of a match in which the rests have been long, we at once put down the play as a long way below first-class, and the players as probably afraid of one another.

During the last three or four years the *average* excellence of match-play has made great strides ; the second and third class have come much closer on the heels of the first class. It is a curious fact, however, that the highest standard of play is, in the opinion of the best judges, no better now than it was perhaps in 1886. For some years previously, the best men had improved obviously year by year ; but since 1886 the very best play has not made much progress, except that a few *more* players have attained the highest rank. That the standard will rise I have no doubt, but someone must come forth to raise it ; someone equally good at all points of the game ; he must be active, and yet sufficiently powerful, with plenty of reach and unlimited lasting powers, an unerring eye and steady nerve. All these qualities are essential in a man to be quite first-rate, and we have never yet seen their union in one individual lawn-tennis player, and I suppose that such a combination will always be so rare that we shall never be overwhelmed with the number of lawn-tennis players of quite first-class form.

What strikes thoughtful spectators is the number of inexcusable mistakes made by our best players in the most important matches ; it is pitiful to see the way they one and all break down at times. I do not suppose we shall ever see

more brilliant play than we have seen, but we want some one to show us this same brilliancy combined with far more accuracy. Lawn tennis is not more difficult than billiards, and when one watches a Roberts at billiards, one sees the most wonderful strokes, and with them an unerring certainty over the comparatively easy ones. I am convinced the same *can* be done at lawn tennis, and that first-class play should be much better than it is.

Of course the great difficulty that men who have kept in the first class for years have had is, that they had no opportunity of seeing play superior to their own, and so have had to proceed, as it were, in the dark: many of their best strokes they have learnt by almost accident in some knock-up game, and then have thought it worth while to practise until they could do them with ease. Players of a lower grade, and also those who have of late attained front rank, have encountered no such obstacle; their task has been to imitate; hence the rapidly narrowing line of demarcation between the classes. There are now tournaments held annually all over Great Britain and her colonies; and more so-called championships than anyone can remember; each county has, or will have, a champion, and, at the present rate, every hamlet too, a few years hence; in fact, we may see the day when it will be a distinction to a lawn-tennis player *not* to be a champion. There is, however, one championship that stands out from the rest, and I hope always will: the winner is not champion of this or champion of that; he is *the* champion of lawn tennis. I need scarcely say that I refer to the meeting held every summer at Wimbledon. This has now taken place annually since 1877, and greater interest is taken in the result all over the world than in all the other tournaments put together.

It is only at this meeting that the question of who is the best man of the year is definitely decided, for in each year since its institution *every* man has competed who has had the remotest chance of victory, and who has been fit and well at the date fixed for the struggle.

At the Championship at Wimbledon a prize meeting is held and competitors are drawn against one another; these play off their matches day by day, until there remains one undefeated, who takes the first prize. It is his privilege to challenge the champion of the preceding year, the former champion being ineligible to play in the prize competition. Such care is taken at Wimbledon to find out, in reality, the best man, that the challenger is allowed a day's rest after his week's work before he is required to play the challenge match for the championship, as it would be manifestly unfair to pit a possibly tired player against a fresh one.

From want of time this plan is not followed at other Championship Meetings, and no doubt injustice to the winner of the Allcomers Prize has at times been the result; as things are, I do not see any way to obviate this, as it is inconvenient to everyone to prolong a meeting over a week, so the holder will, except at Wimbledon, always have a slight advantage over his challenger. There must be an element of luck in the draw at every meeting; in fact, it is the only place where luck comes in at lawn-tennis matches. For instance, A is drawn against B, and has a terrific struggle lasting two or three hours: at the same time C is merely having a little gentle exercise in defeating D: surely A and C do not meet with equal chances the following day; A starting stale, while C is quite fresh. It is unfortunate that there is no way to avoid such a state of things.

There are some people, generally not very good judges of the game, who maintain there is a great deal of luck in a match at lawn tennis; they refer to those strokes, generally severe, which hit the top of the net and fall into the opposite court, so scoring the ace to the striker. There is in reality no luck about this, for it will be noticed by close observers of the game that it is the best player who hits the net oftenest; this shows he is playing the better and more severe game, his strokes are lower than his opponent's, and as he runs the greater risk he deserves all the results of his more daring play.

Lawn tennis is the only game I know in which a man's bodily make should in a great measure influence his style of play; one must not look for the same style in a powerfully built man of about six feet in stature as one sees in a light, active player of some nine or ten stone. The heavy man, to be successful, should rely most on his powers of attack, knowing that on the defensive he has no chance with his more agile opponent. The slimmer player, on the other hand, aware that he cannot in a long struggle continue sending down stroke after stroke with the terrific force of his rival, must trust most to his activity and powers of returning those strokes—in fact, rather wait for his adversary to make a mistake.

The young player, therefore, should first ascertain, and then cultivate, that style which his body is most suited for, and not be led into trying to copy any particular player he may admire, regardless of the fact that he and the object of his worship are as different in make as a greyhound and a mastiff.

I have often heard a young fellow, after some game probably in which he has come off second best, say, 'I am going in for volleying for the future,' or, 'I mean to take up the back game.' Now I want to impress upon everyone the fact that, to play well, one must take up *every* kind of game. The *best* back-play, without volleying on the right occasions, will only make a man a second-class player; and the best volleying, with a weakness at the back of the court, will scarcely nowadays attain third-class rank. No one must suppose from the above remarks that I mean that all men should play the *same* game: I think I have already pointed out this will depend upon the physical qualities of each player; in one man's game volleying will predominate, in another back-play will form the most important part; but to be very successful the former *must* be capable of good strokes from the back-line, and the latter *must* be able to volley effectively when opportunity offers. Playing in good form and playing gracefully are one and the same thing; strokes made with grace are made with more ease to the player; hence a good style should be cultivated, as every

effort that has been made tells on the player at the end of a match. I speak from experience, as, having begun the game at twenty-six, I was too old ever to hope to play with ease—that is, gracefully—and so only do with an effort many strokes which those who have learnt in their teens do quite readily.

I think I cannot do better than conclude this chapter with a warning to young players against playing too much ; they have visions in their heads of gigantic cups, &c., and spoil every chance they may have of winning them by playing so many hours at a time, and so many days consecutively, that they get slack. Nothing is so fatal to style ; unless one is improving it is so easy to go back. An hour and a half two or three days a week will do all that is possible to improve a man's play ; but it must be recollected that for that hour and a half he must be doing his utmost the *whole* time. Too much play, while not perhaps interfering with a man's accuracy of return, is sure to produce a certain staleness which is quite fatal to all dash and brilliancy, and makes a racket feel double its real weight; any player will know what this means. The quickest way to improve is to see the best play possible, and to endeavour to imitate what has been seen when next playing. The strokes to be at first of moderate strength, increasing in force as the player feels confidence in his power of making them ; mere wild, hard hitting is the most fatal mistake a young player can make, but the temptation is great to try to run before you can walk. Every good lawn-tennis player has realized the fact that the game is not learnt in a season, and that it is only to patience and perseverance he owes his present proficiency.

In the chapter I have written I have stated a few ideas I have about match-playing ; but let it be understood that I lay down no laws. My impressions may be right or may be wrong ; I simply record them, at the request of the Editor—an old friend—for what they are worth, as the ideas of one who has played a good many of the most important matches of the last ten years.

# CHAPTER XIV

## A REMINISCENCE OF FIFTEEN YEARS OF LAWN TENNIS

BY SPENCER W. GORE

"If we shall stand still,
In fear our motion will be mocked or carped at,
We should take root here where we sit, or sit
State statues only.

SHAKSPEARE, *Henry VIII.* Act. i. sc. 2

IT is probable that the history of no game can boast of so many radical changes in any fifteen years of its existence, whether in its laws or in the styles adopted by its players, as can lawn tennis. Since the game emerged from its chrysalis state, with its service which converted the first stroke into the real attack, its balls of every conceivable size, shape, and colour, and its many other whimsical peculiarities, up to the present time, there has been a constant succession of changes. It is not my intention to touch upon the changes in the laws, except where they have effected changes in the style or the tactics adopted by the players. Of 'Sphairistike' I will say nothing, as it differed from the present game as much as trap-bat-and-ball differs from cricket, or as lawn tennis from the royal game of tennis.

The first appearance of the game, in anything like its present shape, was when the server was compelled to stand at the base-line, and to serve into a space between the net and the service-line, instead of into a space between the base-line and the service-line, as had been the law at Sphairistike. This was the first important change; but for two years after this there was little done to improve the game. The court resembled an

hour-glass, being ten yards broad at each base-line, and eight yards wide at the net. It seems incredible to us now that it never struck the framers of the laws of that day that in those circumstances the game could be reduced to an absurdity by a man of average height standing in the middle of the court, close to the net, and volleying every ball; and the more so as the net in those days was 4 ft. high in the centre and 5 ft. at the sides; but it is none the less a fact that for two years or more we played both single and double games in these ridiculously shaped courts, and that there was no one then with sufficient imagination to find out the royal road to success.

The styles of play during that period were various. The balls were not of uniform size, and, being uncovered, used to bound in most erratic fashion, according to their age, shape, and dimensions. The courts in those days were rugged on the surface, to say the least, and little care was taken of them; so that it was too much to expect even the best-disposed ball to bound twice alike. It is probable, therefore, that the style of the players was as primitive as were the implements which they used; and of their tactics my only recollection is, that there was a strong disposition to try and put what a Yorkshire bowler would call a great deal of 'stoof' on the ball. In fact, a great deal more was thought of *cut* and *twist* than of placing the ball.

It was in the autumn of 1874 that Mr. J. M. Heathcote, the celebrated amateur champion tennis player, hit upon the happy notion of having lawn-tennis balls covered with white flannel. This led to the balls being made of a more uniform size, to fit the cloth, which was cut in shapes, and also temporarily gave the real tennis players an advantage over their racket-playing antagonists; for the covering necessarily raised the weight of the ball, it bounded less, took more cut, and a heavily-cut ball was puzzling to the uninitiated.

Soon after this it became apparent to the committee of the All England Croquet Club that their game had ceased to be self-supporting; and to some few of its members who

had occasionally been allowed, on sufferance, to play lawn tennis on the sacred croquet-grounds, it occurred that the new game promised to be good and popular, and that a Championship Lawn Tennis Meeting on the All England Croquet-ground might revive the drooping exchequer of the club. A sub-committee was formed, whose first duty it was to draw up a set of laws, in consistence with their ideas on the subject of lawn tennis of the future. These gentlemen must have been considerably in advance of their age, for they drew up a code of laws which differed in very few particulars from that which is now in existence, but which differed so materially from that which was then deemed orthodox as to bring down a shower of abuse upon their devoted heads from many of those who proposed to enter into the competition. The net was lowered to 3 ft. 3 in. in the centre, while it remained at 5 ft. at the sides; the net-posts were placed a yard outside the side-lines on each side, and the court was made rectangular instead of being shaped like an hour-glass. These two latter valuable suggestions were made by Mr. Julian Marshall, who, in conjunction with Mr. Henry Jones (better known as 'Cavendish'), carried out all the arrangements of the first Championship Meeting. All these innovations, we, being British subjects, grumbled at 'not a few'; and we likewise detested the tennis scoring, which was then for the first time introduced, and which puzzled us 'pretty considerable.' The service-line, under the new laws, was actually *five feet* further from the net than it is at present, and the balls were smaller and lighter than those now in use.

Before going further I think I may say that lawn-tennis players ought not to forget the debt of gratitude which they owe to the committee who carried out the first championship programme, and who had the courage to take the bull by the horns, and lay down the set of laws that has been the foundation of the present code, which still appears to give very general satisfaction. Indeed, without them we might still be grovelling in an hour-glass court, with balls of all sorts and

sizes, and governed by laws varying according to the size of the lawn and the surrounding accidents of nature.

From the date of the first championship the history of lawn tennis begins ; for before that time the state of the game might be described as a state of chaos. The first championship may be termed an introduction to the first volume of lawn tennis ; an introduction which proved, at any rate, that, whatever style might hereafter turn out to be the winning one, it was clear that the style of real tennis would not be that winning style. In short, tennis players were disabused of the notion they had taken up, that lawn tennis was in the least like real tennis, save only in name. In the first Championship Meeting the real tennis player had every advantage : the net was high at the sides, which encouraged the player to play from corner to corner as at tennis, rather than straight down the side-lines ; and the service-line was so far from the net as to give the heavily cut tennis service a great advantage. It was in this Championship Meeting that volleying at the net was first successfully tried ; but it was only successful against players who persistently played across the court rather than down the side-lines. With these exceptions there was nothing particularly noticeable with regard to the style of play or the tactics employed by the players.

The next year's championship introduced an entirely new style of play, which lasted some three years ; and this may be termed the 'pat-ball' period. This derisive name of 'pat-ball' was applied to lawn tennis by tennis and racket players, who maintained that, from the absence of back- or side-walls, it was impossible to hit hard without sending the ball out of court. There was a great deal of newspaper warfare on the subject, and there were a certain number of players who strongly advocated the lengthening of the court to fourteen or even fifteen yards on each side of the net. The name of 'pat-ball' was still not at all inapplicable to the style of play which was successful from about 1878 to 1881. In 1877 the winner of the championship adopted the game of volleying close to the

net; and as the majority of his opponents were real tennis players, who hit the ball over the middle of the net at such a height as to make volleying exceedingly easy, this net-volleying was successful. In the next year, however, the winner of the championship defeated this net-volleying by simply tossing the ball over the volleyer's head; and the effort of running back so far after the tossed ball completely tired out the volleyer. I may add that the volleying game was then and there buried in obscurity, and was only revived, but in a different form, some three years afterwards by the present champion.

The winning style then, in 1878, was shown to be that of merely returning the ball gently over the net until the opponent beat himself. Mr. Hadow, the champion of that year, was, unfortunately, unable to take part in the championship of 1879, or doubtless some curiosities in the game would have been witnessed. The championship matches in 1879 were principally remarkable for the extraordinary length of the rests. Between forty and fifty strokes to the rest were not at all an uncommon occurrence; and, speaking from memory, I believe that on one occasion, at a tournament at Prince's Club, there were over eighty strokes in one rest.

A large proportion of the competitors in 1879 adopted the very safe style of play introduced by the champion of 1878; and the winner of the Gold Prize, Mr. J. T. Hartley, was pre-eminent in that style. It is impossible to say decidedly what would have been the result of a match between Messrs. Hartley and Hadow; but it is quite certain that there would have been a record established in the number of strokes to a rest had that match been ever played, since for certainty of return these two players were never approached, either before or since.

In the winter of 1878 the old laws had been thoroughly overhauled by a sub-committee appointed by the A.E.L.-T.C., and their suggested alterations were ratified by the M.C.C. In these new laws there was one important alteration, as affecting the style and tactics of future lawn-tennis players. The net was then lowered to 3 ft. in the centre and 4 ft. 9 in.

at the posts.[1] This alteration in the laws, however, had no immediate effect on the style or the tactics of the players. For a whole year after the alterations the 'pat-ball' style still obtained; indeed, the 'safety' game increased in favour, the players appearing not to have the courage either to hit hard or to endeavour to place the ball to any great extent. In 1880, however, a marked improvement was apparent in the tactics of the players, and this may possibly have been occasioned by the appearance in public of the brothers Renshaw, who took part, although unsuccessfully, in the Championship Meeting of that year. Whether or not this was the reason of the change, there was undoubtedly more spirited play in the championship matches in 1880 than in any of those of the preceding years.

Mr. Hartley, who was again champion, had made a great improvement in his style, and played with much greater dash and severity than in 1879, his placing of the ball, and the use he made of the sides and limits of the court, being in marked contrast to his gentle play of the year before. The 'runner-up' of this year was Mr. H. F. Lawford, who was beginning to develop that wonderful power of hard hitting to which by constant practice he has now attained.

The first appearance of the brothers Renshaw in a Championship Meeting deserves more than a passing notice. They were beaten by Mr. O. E. Woodhouse in the third and fourth rounds respectively; and it was in attempting to volley *at the net* that they failed. They found themselves compelled, after another year's practice, to stand further back—in fact almost at the service-line—where they volleyed with success. These brothers were the first of the new race of lawn-tennis players. They were among the first to begin learning the game while young enough to be capable of improvement. Their predecessors had taken up the game when too old and too stiff to do more than play at the game in the style in which they had played at other games before lawn tennis was introduced; and

[1] In 1882 the net was still further lowered at the sides, so as to make it as nearly level as possible.

they could therefore never get beyond a certain point of excellence before either their loss of activity or their failing eyesight prevented further improvement. But the Renshaws began at the right age for learning; and for the next five or six years each succeeding year showed a marked improvement in their play.

With this year, 1880, may be said to have ended the 'frivolous' era of lawn tennis. Up to this date it had been played by all chiefly as an agreeable way of passing the time and taking healthy exercise. It was regarded as an amusement in the same light as croquet had been looked upon before it by all but the few who played scientifically. And no one had ever seriously imagined that it would take its place as a national game. Indeed, the idea of going through a course of training for a match had not entered into any competitor's mind; and the Championship Meetings were conducted in an informal manner which would have shocked the nerves of the present race of players.

The season of 1881 saw a great change in the style of lawn tennis. In the first place, the numbers of 'tournaments' had gradually increased; the competitors consequently met one another and measured their strength against each other more frequently. This constant match-playing had the effect of greatly improving the play; and the players, from repeated appearances in public, lost their nervousness and did full justice to themselves. The constant 'rubbing noses' against other players gave fresh ideas to all, and it soon became apparent that the very 'safe' style must give way to the more slashing style of the present day. The final blow to the 'pat-ball' game was given by the brothers Renshaw when they discovered that they could stand back at the service-line, and, while covering the whole court, could volley with almost the same severity and precision as when close to the net. Their antagonists soon found out that it was perfectly useless to hit a ball gently to them when they were standing in this position. The ball must be hit hard, and in order to hit it hard enough it must

be hit close to the top of the net, or it would go out of court. But, with this hard and low hitting there is necessarily a greater risk of sending the ball into the net; and no sooner did this become the prevailing style than the rests became shorter and the play proportionately faster and more brilliant.

From 1881, the year in which occurred the first success of the present champion, I do not propose to notice each successive Championship Meeting. Each year brought an improvement in the general play, but no change in the style. The game of lawn tennis from 1881 up to the present time may be described as a battle between two styles of players, the back-player and the volleyer. Of these two styles the latter has by far the most followers amongst the best players. This is only natural; for as long as the present champion, who generally adopts the volleying style, remains champion, his style is sure to command the greatest number of imitators.

Hitherto, lawn tennis had been played in all sorts of different styles, tennis players playing as at tennis, putting cut on every ball and keeping their wrists firm; racket players striking the ball with a certain amount of under-hand twist, and bending the wrist a great deal in making the back-handed stroke; while the distinctive style of almost every game of ball was traceable in one player or another. From 1881, however, the best lawn-tennis players began to develop a distinct stroke of their own. Each year the ball was hit with greater severity; and the players, in striking the ball, did, and now do so, with the flat of the racket, putting on neither cut nor twist. For both cut and twist have, so far, been found to be absolutely useless at this game; and they serve rather to make the ball travel more slowly, after reaching the ground, and to be therefore easier to return. The striker now appears almost to push the ball in front of him, in a style that, to a racket or tennis player, appears awkward and ugly, but which undoubtedly has the effect of making the ball travel fast. Indeed, it is little short of marvellous that so light a ball can be hit so hard, in a space of such limited dimensions, without being driven out of court.

Of the tactics adopted by the lawn-tennis players of the past eight years it would not be out of place to say here a few words. Assuming that the players are both volleyers, the server will commence with as difficult a service as he can give. On the difficulty of the service depends the question whether he adopts an offensive or a defensive policy during the rest. Should he have delivered a hard and difficult service, the striker-out is driven to his defence, and the server may creep nearer and nearer to the net at every stroke, driving the striker-out nearer and nearer to the base-line, until at last the latter, by a feeble stroke, delivers himself into the power of his antagonist, who, with a terrific 'smash,' or a quiet but equally conclusive stroke across the court, decides the rest.

An encounter between a volleyer and a back-player is most interesting, on account of the contrast presented by the different tactics of these rival players. The volleyer, as a matter of course, adopts the same tactics, of endeavouring to drive his antagonist to the back of the court, as when pitted against a brother-volleyer; but the expert back-player, who is quite at home at the back of the court, is not at all alarmed by this form of attack; and by dint of exceedingly hard and well-directed strokes, now to the right and now to the left of the court, he endeavours to keep the volleyer, who is less accustomed to back-play, in the back of his own court, and to prevent him from making his wonted and gradual advance to the net. These two styles of play are often the subject of comparison, and it is difficult to say which is the more worthy of imitation. For my own part, I consider that, for players of ordinary natural capabilities, the back-play is the style that should be practised; and I say this in the face of the fact that the present champion practises the volleying game. For the volleying game a player requires exceptional activity, exceptional quickness of eye, and exceptional powers of starting and recovering himself quickly. These qualifications are rarely combined in one player, and they are all natural gifts, which pass away rapidly under the influence of increasing age;

whereas the back-play, which needs less quickness both of limb and eyesight, lasts far into middle age. A good instance of the veteran back-player is Mr. H. F. Lawford, who has taken part in every championship except the first, has actually been champion, and who, although some ten years older than the present champion, can still make a very respectable fight against him. It is true that in the championship contest in 1887, when Mr. Lawford was successful, Mr. W. Renshaw was incapacitated, through an accident, from defending his championship; but, with this exception, nearly all the prominent players of that year were amongst the entries.

Reckless imitators of the volleying style should also bear in mind that the present champion is not simply a volleyer and nothing else: he is in addition quite as strong a back-player as anyone, with perhaps the exception of Mr. H. F. Lawford. I was much struck with his powerful back-play in the match for the championship in 1885, at which time, in my opinion, he was at his very best. Time after time, when he was completely prevented by Mr. Lawford from working his way to the service-line to volley, he played the back-game in such a manner as to hold his own against his antagonist.

It is this wonderful combination of powerful back and forward play that goes to make Mr. W. Renshaw by far the best player that we have yet seen. Although he was beaten in 1888 for the championship by Mr. W. J. Hamilton, he had not fully recovered from the effects of the accident which prevented his taking part in the contest in 1887; and even in 1889 his play was by no means either so certain or so strong as it was in 1885 and 1886, in which years I consider that he was at his best. Indeed, it is quite possible that he may never again attain to that standard of excellence, seeing that the elasticity and suppleness of limb which are so essential to the game begin to leave us, as a rule, before thirty, and it requires more and more exertion, and consequent exhaustion, to supply their deficiency.

I now come to the all-important question of service; and

I will endeavour to show briefly how the alterations in the laws have affected this branch of the game. As I have said before, the service in the first championship matches was one great advantage which real tennis players had over their opponents. The service-line was then five feet further from the net than it is at present; and there were some absolutely unplayable services delivered, although from their having never before been cut up by lawn-tennis play nor used for any other purpose than croquet, the lawns at Wimbledon were even smoother then than they are now, or than they ever can be again while lawn tennis is played on them. It was believed, and, if I remember rightly, conclusively proved, after this championship, that the server had an undue advantage over the striker-out. All the service at that meeting was delivered more or less from a point level with the shoulder. The present over-hand, or rather over-head, service was then quite unknown. I leave my readers to reflect for themselves on what would be the deadly effect of a service delivered over-handed as at present, with the service-line *five feet further from the net* than it now is!

In the next year (1878) an alteration was made in the service-line; but the service of the players for the championship was generally of rather a feeble character. A first attempt, however, was made at over-hand service by Mr. A. T. Myers; but either it was not accompanied by a corresponding certainty of return, or else it was not of a very formidable character, as he was easily defeated in the second round by the champion of that year.

It was not until 1881 that over-hand service came very generally into use in matches. From 1882 down to the present time it may be said to have become almost universal. Even the second service, after a fault has been given, is now almost always delivered over-handed; the fact being that the service-line has been brought in so near the net, that, given a perfect ground, and no false bound occurring, it is practically impossible, except over-handed, to deliver an unplayable service. It is, however, to be regretted that there should be so little variety

of service; although, doubtless, as lawn tennis progresses generally, more will ultimately be made of this particular and most important branch of the game.

On one occasion that I can call to mind, during a match between Messrs. E. Renshaw and Lawford, at a most important crisis, when the match was going against him, the former tried the experiment of a slow under-hand twisting service with such effect as to completely alter the complexion of affairs. But so rarely is the under-hand service made use of in matches, that it may fairly be said that the only service at present in use amongst the front rank of players is the over-hand 'hammer' service, which was once curtly, if not rudely, summed up by an adverse critic of the game as the result of '*nothing but brute force and ignorance.*' This over-hand service is delivered with marvellous precision and uniformity by Mr. Lawford, but the speed of his service is as nothing compared with that of the Messrs. Renshaw, whom I have seen deliver services so utterly unplayable that their antagonists do not even get near enough to them to *hit* them.

It would be impossible to close any essay on lawn tennis, no matter how short, without some reference to the four-handed game. It is not a little singular that while so much progress has been made in the single-handed game, the four-handed game should remain, as far as play is concerned, much as it was ten years ago. Ridiculous as it may sound to describe a game as having deteriorated from over-brilliancy of play, such would not be an unjust description of four-handed lawn tennis.

When the single court was found to be too narrow for the four-handed game, and it was deemed necessary to make the court twelve yards wide, it was thought that the volleyer would at any rate be deprived of an undue advantage; and for some time this proved to be the case. In a book on lawn tennis, published some eight or nine years ago, the writer, in his hints on the four-handed game, described his ideal pair as working like 'two buckets in a well'—that is, when one ran up to the net,

the other retreated to the back of the court, and *vice versâ*. Judging by the play in four-handed matches of the present time, this is apparently an altogether exploded notion. In these matches, the tactics adopted by the rival pairs are as follows :—After the service has been delivered and returned both pairs advance to the service-line, and each player occupies one side of the court, volleying everything within reach ; so that often, from the time the service is returned to the end of the rest the ball never touches the ground. That there is some extraordinarily brilliant play in these matches cannot be questioned for a moment ; but that these are the best tactics to pursue in the four-handed game remains still more than doubtful. If these are the only winning tactics, then it appears to me that there must be something radically wrong with the laws which govern the four-handed game, and the sooner the shape of the court is altered the better. But, in my opinion, there is another explanation of the case ; namely, that the best single-game players do not give any careful study to the four-handed game, and therefore, although from their individual excellence they can, when playing in pairs, defeat antagonists less individually good, yet they do not, when combined, play by any means their strongest possible game. Moreover, from the different width of the courts, it would be unwise for an intending competitor for a single-handed match to practise much in the four-handed court, as he would be apt to lose that exact nicety of strength of stroke which is required in lawn tennis.

In the foregoing pages I have endeavoured to give a rough sketch of some of the changes that have taken place in lawn tennis during the past fifteen years. I should not, however, be doing my duty as an impartial critic and chronicler of the game if I did not give an opinion as to how lawn tennis ranks with other games at ball. 'The charm of the game lies in its simplicity,' was the universal criticism on lawn tennis when it was first introduced, and we all of us wondered, even as we still wonder at the invention of the perforated edges to postage stamps, why we had not thought of it first. I for one

should be the last to cavil at simplicity in a game ; but, in my opinion, it is its want of variety that will prevent lawn tennis in its present form from taking rank amongst our great games. The great geniuses—the senior wranglers, so to speak, of ball-games—will generally be attracted by some game which, while presenting equal if not greater difficulties to be surmounted, is less monotonous than lawn tennis. That anyone who has really played well at cricket, tennis, or even rackets, will ever seriously give his attention to lawn tennis, beyond showing himself to be a promising player, is extremely doubtful ; for in all probability the monotony of the game as compared with the others would choke him off before he had time to excel in it. In this respect lawn tennis compares unfavourably with golf, for we constantly see the most ardent votaries of and greatest experts at these three, if I may so term them, superior games content to efface themselves, and join the noble army of 'duffers' at the all-enthralling game of golf. It is to lawn tennis that I personally, and possibly also many of my readers, owe the deepest debt at gratitude ; and perhaps I may be forgiven if I relapse into a personal narrative in order to illustrate my meaning. Singular as it may appear, this infant among games first brought under my notice that king of games of which, except in name, I had absolutely no previous knowledge. There was an indescribable fascination in playing the ball across the net instead of up against a wall, that caused me, after a year of lawn tennis, to think it might be worth my while, in a patronising sort of way (for I think that racket players, until they come to play it themselves, always rather look down upon tennis), to learn tennis. I accordingly determined to take lessons, and approached the tennis court with a *veni, vidi, vici* feeling in my heart. Let me here remark that I had been rather above the 'duffer' stage both at cricket and rackets, and lawn tennis in its early days had come easy to me ; I therefore thought it would be the same with tennis, and that probably after about an hour's play I should be a match for my would-be teacher. A short five minutes, however, sufficed to disabuse

me of my illusion. I found that I could barely hit the ball over the net, and as for cutting it, I should never be able to do so properly; that, even with sufficient leisure time, I could never hope to be in the third class of players; and that, with the small amount at my disposal, the fifth class must be the summit of my ambition. And yet from that day there was only one tennis for me, and that was *the* tennis, that game at which old men can play successfully, and which is a source of joy to us as spectators as long as our eyesight lasts. Still, while we possibly may not desire to see the flower of every branch of British intellect watching a lawn-tennis match as keenly as we now so often see them watching a cricket match; while we may never see statesmen taking to lawn tennis as keenly as they do to golf; while it is improbable that a bishop will ever say of lawn tennis as did the bishop quoted in the 'Field' of tennis, that he 'could hardly conceive *anything* on earth more serious than tennis'—lawn tennis has merits of its own which other games do not possess. Tennis courts are scarce, but lawn tennis is everywhere; it is played in the open air, and the courts of the older game, with one exception, are now built with roofs to them; cricket and golf occupy the best part of a day, but two hours' hard lawn tennis will satisfy even the most robust.

Of the future I will be silent, as, bearing in mind the number of changes which have taken place in the game in so short a time, it would be dangerous to prophesy. The ever-increasing popularity of lawn tennis is a sufficient testimony to its merit; but I should be the last to contend that there is no room for improvement, either in the style of players or in the laws. He would be a bold man, however, who would attempt to tackle, on his own responsibility, the alteration of those laws, which have worked well up to the present time; and it is probable that in future they will only be altered when abuses creep in and the lawn-tennis public clamours for a remedy.

## CHAPTER XV

### HARD COURTS AND COVERED COURTS

> Here is better than the open air; take it thankfully.
>
> SHAKSPEARE, *King Lear*, Act iii. sc. 5

IN many parts of the world lawn-tennis players can find no turf to play on. In England there is abundance of excellent turf, but it is available only for a few short summer months, and not always in these. It is not surprising, therefore, that, from the first introduction of the game, a substitute for grass has been eagerly demanded. We might, perhaps, wonder that the substitute which can be used for so great a portion of the year when play on grass is impossible, has not long ago driven its prototype out of the field, and that this has not been the case is no small tribute to the merits of turf, though it is due partly to the charm of out-of-doors play, partly to considerations of economy, still more perhaps to the defects of all substitutes hitherto introduced. If, for instance, our climate admitted of the formation and maintenance of the excellent sand-courts used at Cannes, and elsewhere on the Continent, it may be doubted whether the popularity of turf could have remained unimpaired; but, as matters stand, it appears that grass, during such time as it is fit for play, is in no danger of serious competition. Its principal rivals out-of-doors have hitherto been gravel, concrete, asphalte, and many combinations of material differing from, but partaking more or less of the characteristics of, the two latter materials. To these must now be added brick dust courts, which may possibly be destined to a wide sphere of utility. Gravel courts, though at first sight attractive, have many serious defects. They must be

very carefully constructed, and require much attention to keep them in order. With the utmost care a very slight frost, followed by a bright sunny day, renders them quite useless. They are of a bad colour, and are ruinous to shoes and balls alike. With these drawbacks they are not very likely to be extensively patronized in the future.

Concrete and cement are open to many objections. They are fatiguing to the eyes and limbs, and trying to the feet; the surface is generally so rough as to be destructive of balls and shoes alike; and, in addition to this, it is liable to crack with frost. Cinder courts have never enjoyed much popularity, and are not extensively in use at the present time. They are cheap and easy to construct, but the surface is so gritty, and balls are so quickly blackened and worn out by contact with it, that it does not seem necessary to say much of this material. Asphalte courts are expensive, and liable to crack under the influence of frost, and to be affected by a hot sun. They are also apt to be too smooth for safety or for a satisfactory bound of the ball, and change of temperature not unfrequently causes them to sweat. Nevertheless, asphalte is probably the best of the materials above mentioned for use in England in the winter, and can hardly cost more than some at least of the alternatives which have at various times been proposed or tried. So long ago as 1881 a basalt court was constructed in Australia, and two years later it was described in the columns of *Pastime*[1] as being altogether satisfactory. It is not known to the writer whether any court has been constructed in England on the same principle. 'After levelling the ground, lay first a layer of broken *blue stone*, 2-in. gauge;' then a layer of broken *blue stone*, 1-in. gauge. All the material placed on this must be passed through boiling tar before being used, and should consist as follows :—

1. Of a layer of broken *blue stone*, $\frac{5}{8}$-in. gauge;
2. Of a layer of the same, $\frac{3}{8}$-in. gauge;
3. Of a layer of the same, $\frac{3}{16}$-in. gauge.

[1] *Pastime*, September 7, 1883.

A heavy roller should be constantly passed over all this during the operations. The whole thickness of these layers amounted to 4½ to 5 in., of which the last but one should be ¾ in. thick, and the last a little less. A coating of the finest *blue-stone* dust must then be spread, and the floor left for a week; after which time liquid tar must be poured upon it from cans with rose-spouts, and this should be swept all over the surface, in a thin film, with ordinary stable brooms, *blue-stone* dust being again spread over it to absorb the surplus tar, which is sure to "sweat out" from time to time. This system costs but *2s. 6d.* per sq. yard in Australia. *Blue stone* is the name given there to basalt.'

A stone flagging round the floor is said to be advisable, as being convenient to work to, and the floor should be left at least a fortnight before playing on it. It is stated to have stood two years' use under the full blaze of an Australian sun without deterioration. The cost of such a court 40 yards long by 21 yards wide in Australia would at the price given have been about 105*l.*; but the contractor said that he would not put down another such floor under *2s. 9d.* or *3s.* per square yard. It was stated that the same basalt could be bought in England at 15*s.* or 16*s.* a ton. The cost of this material would of itself be likely to deter imitators. A cheaper material, for what may conveniently be called a 'brick rubble court,' was proposed by a correspondent to the *Field*,[1] writing from Beckenham, a year or two later, to be constructed in the following manner:

1. Level to 12 in. below the proposed surface, and consolidate with rams.

2. Trench for a 3-in. land drain-pipe round the court, and for six rows of 2 in. pipes across it at equal distances apart; the pipes to lie on an impervious clay bottom three or four inches below the top of the trench and packed in rubble up to the level of the foundation bed. Secure sufficient fall and a good outfall.

[1] *Field*, November 21, 1885.

3. Cover the foundation bed with 4 in. of large brick rubble, and ram it down.

4. Spread 4 in. of coarse ballast (burnt clay) sifted of its finer portion by a ¼-in. riddle, and roll well.

5. On the top of this roll in a layer 2 in. of finer ballast, i.e. ¼ in. stuff sifted by a ⅛-in. riddle. Consolidate this layer with water, and do not spare the roller.

6. The remaining 2 in. of bed are to be a mixture of burnt Thames sand, and the finest siftings of ballast, in the proportion of four or five of the former to one of the latter, mixed by riddling through a ⅛-in. sieve. Roll lightly.

7. Lay on the final layer ½ in. above the intended level, and roll down to that level with free use of water and with a heavy roller. The cost is said to be 60*l.* to 70*l.*, and it is stated (1889) that time has only improved the court, and that, the material having sunk to the proper level, the yearly cost of maintenance is very trifling. Every autumn the surface is raised, re-levelled, and rolled; and in this way all worn places are repaired and green mould eliminated, while the drainage is improved.

About the same time another correspondent, residing at Sutton, wrote to the same journal recommending a much cheaper court, which, being laid on chalk, required no drainage except a fall of 8 in. from side to side, the area being 105 ft. by 56 ft. The ground having been levelled to a depth of 8 in., forty loads of burnt brick rubbish at 3*s.* 6*d.* a load about ¼th of a brick in size were laid down on the surface, carefully raked and levelled, and then other twenty loads of rather finer material were added. This was rolled one day with a horse-roller, and again for two days with a hand-roller, after which it was well rammed all over. Fifteen loads of the refuse sifted as fine as possible, were then added, rammed well, and rolled with a hand-roller for three or four days. The writer is assured by the gentleman who constructed this court that the fall from side to side was barely perceptible, and might be dispensed with on a chalk foundation, the natural

drainage being perfect. On a clay subsoil a few drain pipes would be required, involving an additional outlay of 4*l.* or 5*l.* When first laid down this court cut up a little, and required raking and rolling after play; but after three or four months the surface consolidated perfectly, and required nothing more to be done to it. The total expense of this court barely amounted to 20*l.*, and it may certainly be pronounced to be as economical a lawn-tennis court as could be desired, or as has ever been constructed. It must, however, be borne in mind that from the nature of the subsoil no drainage was required, and that the material was obtained within three-quarters of a mile. On a heavy soil, and where the material must be brought from a distance, the cost would be proportionally increased. Like the court last described, it shares with gravel the defect of suffering from thaw after a night's frost; but no open-air court can in this climate be entirely free from this drawback.

*Brickdust.*—A very useful winter court, known as the 'brick-dust' court, has been for some years in use. Several of these have been constructed by Mr. E. Randall, builder, of Claygate, near Esher, who has kindly furnished details of the method of formation. After excavating to a depth of about six inches, the ground is made perfectly level and even, after which three or four inches of coarse brick rubbish is placed upon it; the surface is levelled, the rubbish is further broken up, and the whole 'punnered' or rammed down to a fairly even surface. Kiln-dust, taken from under the burned clamps of bricks, is next procured from the brickyard and screened through a $\frac{3}{8}$-in. screen. The coarser portion, which will not pass through the screen, is then laid down evenly and well rolled and rammed, after which the finer portion of the brickdust is put on with a rake and well rolled. The amount of material required for a court 120 ft. by 60 ft. would be about 60 loads of the coarser kind, and 40 loads of the finer. This kind of court appears to require little care to keep it in order, and receives high praise from those who have tried it. The cost varies

from 30*l.* to 50*l.* according to the distance and expense of procuring and casting the materials. If constructed in the winter the ordinary rainfall will be sufficient to consolidate the surface, but in summer some amount of watering will be desirable. No raking, but rolling only, is required to keep it in order; but it should not be used during the progress of a thaw. When the frost is out of the ground it should be rolled. The best way to mark out this court is to apply fresh-slacked lime with a whitewash brush, repeating the process on a new court three times. The court should be surrounded by a wire-netting 6 ft. or more high to keep the balls in. If they become wet from contact with the grass or ground outside the court, the brickdust adheres to them; in no other way does the material appear to cause any inconvenience, and wind is said to have no effect upon the court. Of course, it is affected by alternate frost and thaw, in the same way as most of those previously mentioned; but, after making all deductions, many good judges consider the 'brickdust' court the best which has yet been invented for winter use, while the cost is very moderate and the trouble of maintenance trifling.

A short description may be here added of a court recently made at the Hôtel d'Albion, Hyères, in the South of France, though it cannot be recommended for imitation in this country, the climate of which is hardly suitable to a court so slightly constructed. Ten inches of soil having been excavated, about six inches of rough stone direct from the quarry are packed as closely together and as evenly as possible, and a thin layer of gravel, or even earth, is placed on this to fill up all interstices. Upon this is placed a mixture of lime, sand, and refuse from the gas-works, thoroughly beaten and rolled down. The refuse is introduced to prevent the growth of weeds, for which purpose a solution of sulphate of copper would be equally effective.[1] After all, these courts, though available on many days in winter, are often, at least in England, rendered useless by the state

[1] *Field*, February 23, 1889.

of the weather, and the player who is desirous of practising throughout the year, irrespective of rain, snow, or frost, must have recourse to a covered court.

The number of these is already considerable, and may be expected to increase in proportion to the increasing number of players who, by the facilities already afforded to them, have seen and appreciated the singular beauty and interest, as well as the scientific character, of this branch of the game. Those who, by this means, can play lawn tennis throughout the year, have an immense advantage over those of their rivals whose practice is limited to the short and capricious duration of an English summer. It is conceived, therefore, that no apology is necessary for going at some length into this question. Many private owners and clubs have erected covered courts which are admirable in many respects, approaching more or less nearly to excellence in proportion as their builders have been guided by the lessons which experience has taught. The essentials are, of course, an ample margin round the court; a good floor, in regard both to substance and quality; abundance of light without glare; adequate ventilation without uncomfortable draughts; and sufficient height to admit of the game being played on similar conditions to those found out of doors in regard to lobbing. Spacious galleries and dressing-rooms are accessories which, though not indispensable, are hardly less important to the comfort of players and spectators. Of the above conditions some of the older courts are deficient, particularly in the matter of margin, height, lighting, and ventilation. Avoiding, however, any invidious insistence upon these defects, it is proposed here to describe with some minuteness one court which, by the unanimous opinion of those who have been privileged to make use of it, is the most perfect that can be found at the present time. This court belongs to the Earl of Cavan, is situated at Wheathampstead in Hertfordshire, and was completed in 1888. It was erected by Mr. F. Owen, Gustard Wood, Wheathampstead, under the personal superintendence of Lord Cavan. For the floor

16 in. of clay were first cut away, and on the surface so made 12 in. of cement concrete were laid down. Above that, 6 in. of a composition in which a specially prepared gravel, cement, and three or four other ingredients are combined, and which was the outcome of repeated experiments conducted by Lord Cavan and Mr. Owen. This composition is practically indestructible, is rougher and firmer, and not more costly than asphalte, and is believed to be superior to that material in the bound of the ball; at all events, those who have played in the court have been unable to find any fault with it in this respect. It is stained a very dark brown, approaching closely to black. The total area of the floor is 124 ft. by 63 ft., so that the margin outside the court is from each base-line to the wall 23 ft., and from each side-line 13 ft. 6 in., an interval ample enough to satisfy the demands of the most active player or of the most exacting critic. The court is constructed with cast-iron stanchions, wrought-iron girders, principals, and Louvre, cast-iron ornamental cresting, with galvanized-iron sides, the plates of which overlap in order to prevent the entry of wet, and ends to the following dimensions: 124 ft. long, centre to centre of end stanchions; 67 ft. 6 in. wide, centre to centre of stanchions; 22 ft. high at the eaves; 38 ft. high to the under side of the ridge of the roof; the lowest tie-rod is 27 ft. from the ground, but in the centre of the court, for a distance of 40 ft., the lowest tie rods are raised to a height of 30 ft. by the introduction of four columns and girders placed near the net, two on each side. A height of 30 ft. at the point where the ball must reach its greatest altitude thus secures to the most inveterate lobber ample scope for the exercise of his talent; but if this is not enough, as the tie-rods are round iron bars only 2 in. in diameter, any ball missing them is considered in play, so that there are eight additional feet of height in which a lobbed ball may conceivably disport itself. In fact, however, few balls surmount the tie-rods. The whole of the roof is glazed with $\frac{3}{8}$-in. 'cast-plate glass,' on Helliwell's patent system, without the use of wooden sash-bars, so that the

maximum of light is obtained, while the glare of the sun is obviated by a solution of whiting, size, and glue, two coatings of which will last through the six winter months. The iron sash-bars are constructed in such a manner that the moisture caused by condensation is carried away by a small water-channel, which discharges into the eaves gutter. All the work is painted black inside and dark green outside. The Louvre ventilators are fixed on both sides of the lantern-light in the roof, and run the whole length of the building. To prevent penetration by snow, they have movable shutters, covered with very fine perforated zinc, but these shutters can be left open if desired. A platform runs the whole length of the lantern, which admits of easy access. There are two side galleries, one opposite each net post, approached separately from the outside, to prevent any obstruction to the players. One of these is enclosed for warmth, fitted with a stove, filter, &c., and is used as a tea-room. Each has a dressing room at one end. At one end of the court is a building, partly intended as a gallery, from which to watch the game, while the rest is used as a lavatory, fitted with cupboards for rackets, &c. In addition to the Louvre ventilators, there are sliding 'hit and miss' ventilators in the iron sheets of the walls, and eight of the sheets are made to open bodily. All floors composed of asphalte, or of the composition used at Wheathampstead, are liable to sweat when temperature changes suddenly: so far as possible this is here obviated by the use of two of Doulton's radiating stoves, and one mail-clad stove, by Petter of Yeovil, the pipes of which are carried up inside the building, and stoves and pipes are protected by wire guards. It is needless to say that the erection of such a court as is here described nas necessitated a large outlay. The total cost was 2,400*l.*, of which the galleries, house, and heating apparatus are responsible for about 400*l.* Expenditure might be reduced by diminishing the area of the floor and the height of the court, but the sacrifice of efficiency would be great in proportion to the saving effected.

It must not be supposed that the choice of material for the floor is limited to asphalte or cognate substances. In the opinion of many of the best judges, a well-laid wooden floor is the most suitable to covered courts. It has two advantages over what may conveniently be called 'metal' floors. One is the absence of jar to the feet, which, on asphalte, is considerable, especially to players of middle age, and the second is the closer resemblance of the bound of the ball to that which is obtained from hard and lively turf. The disadvantages are the greater expense and the difficulty of keeping boards perfectly even without frequent 'trimming' or re-planing. The floor of the old Maida Vale Court, now demolished, was of asphalte, and is still highly spoken of by all who played upon it; but the Hyde Park Club Court, which in 1885 replaced that at Maida Vale, was constructed with a wooden floor, which is, however, not considered altogether satisfactory. It occupies an important position as the scene of the Covered Courts Championship, which, since the institution of the Hyde Park Club, has been played there annually. It is 106 ft. long by 49 ft. 6 in. wide, giving a margin of 14 ft. at each end and of 6 ft. 9 in. from the side-lines of the double court to the wall. The glass roof has a span of 54 ft., and the lowest obstruction to the ball is a girder, which, in the middle of the court, is 25 ft., and at the sides 20 ft., above the floor. In the three essentials of height, space, and lighting there is little room for complaint; but the floor is composed of parallel wooden boards about 4 in. wide, laid on bearers 1 ft. apart, and fastened in such a manner that no nails appear on the surface. It is said that boards so laid have a tendency to separate and work up when played on, so that they frequently require trimming, and also that the bound of the ball when it drops over a joist is not the same as when it pitches between two joists. The boards should not be less than $1\frac{1}{4}$ in. thick, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. would be better. For some reason much practice is required to familiarize a player with the peculiarities of this floor, and to this cause may partly be due the comparative

indifference with which this interesting championship has been lately regarded.

It is probably with a view to avoid these defects that the fine new courts at the Queen's Club, West Kensington, opened in April, 1889, have been constructed on a different principle. The two courts are side by side in one building, with pillars between them, on which rest respectively the two roofs, forming a double gable. There is a margin at the sides of each court of 10 ft., and an interval between the two, therefore, of 20 ft. The two parts of the building being of unequal length, there is a margin at each end of one court of 20 ft., and of 17 ft. at each end of the other. It is lighted by side windows, as well as from the roof, the glazed space in each roof being about one-fourth of the whole area; but, as each court contributes light to the other, the total amount is greater than if the buildings had been separate. The height of the spring of the roof is 23 ft. from the floor, and that of the tie-rods in the centre, which form the lowest obstacle, is 28 ft. 6 in. The floor is composed of rectangular blocks of wood, 11 in. by $2\frac{7}{8}$ in. and $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. deep, laid herring-bone fashion, and known as Duffy's patent wood-block flooring, each block being pinned to its neighbour. With the view of making the floor rather less solid than it would otherwise be, these are laid on felt nearly half an inch in thickness, the whole being placed on a layer of cement four inches in depth. The whole of the floor is alike, and the bound and pace of the ball are said to be as near as possible the same as on a hard grass court. One of the courts has recently been taken up and relaid, and is described as being excellent in all respects. The floor and walls are coloured dark green, as being more cheerful than black, and the inside of the roof is painted white.

The covered court erected at Creaton, near Northampton, by Mr. F. N. Langham, can hardly, in strictness, be called a lawn-tennis court, as all the walls are there brought into the play. Owing to the facts that the court is smaller than the normal size, that the ball may be taken off the walls, and that the

service-line is placed at 23 ft. from the net, practice in this court is of little use for the usual game on grass; but it is so pretty and interesting in itself, and the cost of erection was so small, that a short account of it is here given. The dimensions are 70 ft. by 33 ft., with a height of 23 ft. The side-walls are of wood, and are 8 ft. in height, above which the ball is out of play. The whole of one end-wall, and so much of the other as is below the spectators' gallery, is in play. It is lighted by windows in the side, 5 ft. 6 in. high, and above these springs the corrugated-iron roof. The cost of the whole building only amounted to 439*l.*, of which the floor, composed of the best French asphalte, cost 102*l.*, the roof representing 137*l.*, and the timber and labour about 200*l.* The windows, having been given, are not included in this calculation, and the wood was obtained from the Cottesbrooke estate at a slightly reduced expense. After taking all these circumstances into consideration, it is probable that the price of a similar court built by contract would be 480*l.* to 500*l.* Mr. Langham also considers that the court would be improved by the addition of four feet to its length, and that lights ought to have been introduced into the roof; two alterations which would have added slightly to the initial expense. In any case, the Creaton court is probably the cheapest, and not by any means the worst, thing of its kind, though it must be admitted that, if the game played in it can be described as lawn tennis at all, it is at least a specimen of a somewhat original type.

If a comparison can usefully be instituted between the relative fastness of these various materials with that of grass, it may be said generally that the bound of the ball, even on lively turf, is the lowest and slowest. A wooden floor is slightly faster than grass; the composition used at Wheathampstead is a little faster than wood, and asphalte heads the list in this respect, though, being smoother, the rise of the ball is perhaps a little less on asphalte than on the other materials. A comparison of this kind, however, cannot be strictly accurate, for the liveliness of grass varies so greatly from differences of

soil and of thickness of herbage, that it is very far from conforming to a fixed standard. Suggestions have been made to counteract what has been sometimes considered the excess of bound on the harder courts by a corresponding change in the ball; it is believed, however, that players find little difficulty in adapting themselves to varying conditions of floor, and that the maintenance of uniformity in the standard ball is a matter of much higher importance than any advantage which might be secured by a uniform ratio between the quickness of the floor and the bound of the ball.

# CHAPTER XVI

## LADIES' LAWN TENNIS

BY MISS L. DOD

> To thee a woman's services are due.
> SHAKSPEARE, *King Lear*, Act iv. sc. 2

THERE is no game introduced of recent years that has become so quickly and deservedly popular with all classes as lawn tennis. It is likely not only to retain its popularity, but to increase it, as it provides delightful and healthy exercise, of which ladies had long felt the want, and which croquet did not afford.

Major Wingfield's Sphairistike was avowedly a game for every age and every sex. This intention has been remarkably carried out; but there was at one time a real danger lest gentlemen's and ladies' lawn tennis should be entirely separated, with different grounds, balls, and laws. By some it was considered as only a lady's game; by others as quite beyond their powers, and it is only when we come across extracts from old newspapers that we realize the enormous improvement made in their play. For some years after its introduction the game was evidently thought beyond them both as regards body and mind. There were piteous moans about the weight of the balls, and pathetic appeals not to spoil it as croquet had been spoiled, by making it too scientific. It was represented, not it may be hoped by ladies, but on their behalf, that no lady could understand tennis scoring.

In 1876 a correspondent writes, 'I do not think any lady can, or will ever be able to, play the game, as it is very hard

work for a man, and dress is such a drag,' and Badminton is suggested as more suitable. Another writer proposes to 'serve easy balls' to ladies, and 'play as near them as possible.' She is also 'to serve from a crease' comparatively close to the net while her opponent is to serve from the end of the court: it is added, however, that these privileges must be modified when the lady begins to play really well. Again, a lady is 'to refuse as many services as she likes.' And so late as 1879, 'Common sense' complains of the size of courts, the weight of balls, the strain on the muscles of the hand, the danger of being hit in the eye, and proposes special rules for garden parties.

Most of these suggestions were made through the medium of the *Field* newspaper, and the editor of that journal was thus for a time made the ruler of the game, as well as an arbiter of fashion, credited with the ability to regulate not only the weight of a lady's racket, but also the length of her skirt. For the moment, in fact, he was invested with the prerogative of an irresponsible despot.

It is to be remarked, however, that in the very year in which some of these despairing appeals were printed, the necessity for them was conclusively disproved. In that year the first important championship meeting in which ladies took part was held in Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin. Not only were there mixed doubles, but a ladies' single championship match as well. The former was won by Mr. E. Elliott and Miss Costello, against Mr. C. Barry and Miss Langrishe, one of three sisters who distinguished themselves greatly in the tournament. The single championship was won by Miss M. Langrishe, the youngest of the competitors. The match was played in the covered asphalte court of the Fitzwilliam Club; and the play is said to have been very good, certainty of return being particularly mentioned. The example set by Dublin was followed at Bath in 1881, at the Northern Championship meeting in 1882, at Cheltenham in 1883, at Wimbledon in 1884. A Ladies' Double Championship was instituted in 1885 at Burton, and one for mixed doubles at the Northern Meeting in 1888, and

'PLAY

at the present time no lawn-tennis meeting ever takes place to which ladies are not freely admitted. It is needless to say that the laws of the Lawn Tennis Association are recognised and cheerfully obeyed by one sex as by the other, and ladies may be proud that this is so, and of their present standing in the game. They have now everywhere special competitions and championships, and almost as much interest is centred in the results as in the matches of the opposite sex, while there can be no doubt that healthy rivalry and keen following of a noble game is as beneficial as it is novel to ladies, and it is to be hoped they may always have the advantage of it.

Like many other pursuits, whether of work or play, the advantage of acquiring a good style at the very beginning cannot be over-rated. If the foundation be good, continuous improvement is certain. There should be no stiffness of arm or elbow, no aiming after grace or effect; for all strokes, if made correctly, allowing the free, easy movement of the body are naturally graceful. It is for the want of a good foundation that, out of the vast number of ladies who play lawn tennis, so few excel, although they may play all day and every day. Therein, also, lies their mistake; they play far too much, they overdo it; for it stands to reason that no one can play all day and every day without getting 'stale,' and consequently careless, thereby contracting bad habits, which, as is truly said, are easy to acquire, but most difficult to get out of. For myself, I find it far better not to play every day, but to vary the sport, and take some other form of exercise; and if ladies would only try the same, they would derive great benefit, and come back fresh for some good hard sets, striving to improve their weak points, not only to win the game.

A very important thing for beginners at lawn tennis is, first of all, to see that the net is the correct height, the posts three feet outside the court, to play with good balls (not necessarily new balls), and strictly observe all the rules of the game. Quantities of balls are sold in various shops stamped 'Regulation,' but with which it is not possible to play lawn tennis,

they being of all weights and sizes, frequently either too hard or too soft. With a standard ball one learns in time what result can be attained by a certain strength; whereas, without such sound basis, it is impossible to be accurate and precise.

An excellent method of learning a good stroke is to practise against a wall, and when the proper way of hitting a ball has once been acquired, there will be many opportunities of learning to drive in whatever sets one plays. To hit a ball hard and keep it in court, it must be timed carefully, and to do this, it is necessary to look hard at the ball, and never hit it on the rise. Beginners, ladies more especially, run into the ball, taking it round-arm fashion. The habit of looking carefully at the ball and timing it correctly can be learned by practice, and should be cultivated on all occasions.

The back-hand stroke must not, however, be neglected. It is certainly a great stumbling block to most ladies, who try to solve the difficulty by running round their balls and taking them fore-handed. This is a great mistake, as I myself found, and thereafter made a rule never to run round a ball, even though at first I lost ace after ace. The great thing to be remembered is to present the body sideways to the ball, right foot foremost, so that the arm can have full and easy swing. It is important to practise back-hand strokes, both down the side-line and across the court; players are rarely found equally good at both, and most seem to lack the necessary ambition to master the stroke most difficult to them. I believe myself in changing the grip of one's racket, both for fore- and back-handed strokes. If the racket when at rest be always held with the left hand, near the shoulder, this change can be effected quite mechanically with practice. I find it quite impossible to make a good fore-hand stroke with my racket held as for a back-hand, and *vice versâ*. This is considered very wrong by many players; but it seems to me a decided cut is put upon the ball, for both strokes, unless the hold upon the racket be changed. Sometimes it is advisable to cut the ball; for example, a delicate back-hand stroke short across the

court can be played to fall much nearer the net if cut; but for all ordinary strokes and straightforward driving it is best left out, as it not only impedes the velocity of the ball, but adds considerably to the uncertainty of hitting it correctly.

Ladies should learn to run, and run their hardest, too, not merely stride. They would find (if they tried) that many a ball, seemingly out of reach, could be returned with ease; but instead of running hard they go a few steps and exclaim: 'Oh! I can't,' and stop. Having returned the ball, be immediately on the move, and try to see where the next one is coming, and get into a good position.

Having learned to time a ball properly, and to drive an easy ball, the next thing to learn is volleying. This can also be well practised against a wall, and it is useful to stand at the service-line with someone on the opposite service-line, and play a sort of battledore and shuttlecock, keeping the ball up as long as possible. In volleying, the position of the feet is of the utmost importance. It is well to remember that for a fore-hand stroke the left foot should be advanced, the body sideways, and the balance at the moment of striking on the same foot, whilst for the back-hand the position should be reversed, with the right foot to the front. This gives the greatest freedom to the strokes, besides rendering the body quite steady while taking them, which is half the battle towards success in bringing them off. A much longer reach is also obtained by it. When practicable, the ball should be taken with the head of the racket above the wrist; for instance, a ball about the level of the net should be taken in this way, the body slightly bent and the wrist well dropped.

Of course, the best practice of all is to play against good players, and I believe it impossible to reach the first class without the knowledge and experience that is gained by play at a large open tournament. It is good for play in all senses of the word. First, because in playing a match one tries one's very hardest. Secondly, because a great variety of players are met to try one's skill against a splendid lesson in humility, besides

giving new zest for improvement. Thirdly, because much can be learned by intelligently watching first-class players.

Ladies' dress, too, is a matter for grave consideration; for how can they ever hope to play a sound game when their dresses impede the free movement of every limb? In many cases their very breathing is rendered difficult. A suitable dress is sorely needed, and hearty indeed would be the thanks of puzzled lady-players to the individual who invented an easy and pretty costume. The weight of the dress should hang as much as possible from the shoulder, not from the waist, and the skirt should be so wide that, however long the stride, there would be no danger of catching the foot. The sleeves should be perfectly loose and free in every way, so as to allow of the full sweep of the racket straight from the shoulder. For volleying, more especially than for back-court play, it is essential that the dress should be loose; for the movements are more sudden; and one has to be continually on the alert and ready to spring from side to side. It is a pity that ladies do not oftener play the volleying game, but still keep to the old way of long rests from the back of the court. It certainly requires more confidence, strength, and agility, which makes it all the better exercise, and improvement is impossible where there is no ambition.

The Mixed Doubles Championship, held at the Northern Tournament first in 1888, was a great acquisition to the roll of United Kingdom Championships, and will probably tend to greatly improve that class of play. Most ladies prefer a mixed double, because the fatigue is nothing to that of a single, whilst the play is far superior to a ladies' double, and much more exciting. In mixed doubles, it is my opinion that the pair is much stronger where the lady can go up and volley, taking her fair share of the work. If she stays back, there is always an opening where the ball can be sent back to her, whereas there appears none if she be up with her partner on the service-line. According to her ability she should be allowed to take more or less balls, and if necessary keep well to one side of the court. The gentleman can be ready to run back for any balls lobbed

over her head. Speaking from experience, the advantage is great when playing against a pair with the lady back; for many balls can be dropped short over the net or volleyed straight across the court which are quite impossible for the lady to reach if far back. Altogether there is less moving about and changing of places, which is very disconcerting to the lady.

Ladies' doubles would be far more interesting if fought like gentlemen's, on the service-line. It is undoubtedly the strongest position for a pair playing well together, and will probably be far more generally adopted in a few years than it is now. Two good volleyers will beat two good back-players or a volleyer and a back-player, for the same reasons that apply to a lady and gentleman volleying together, only with two ladies playing far back in court it is still easier to drop balls short out of their reach.

It is doubtful whether ladies gain anything by serving over-hand. In the majority of cases they expend a good deal of strength without making the service more difficult than the ordinary under-hand; therefore, unless exceptionally good, and performed without undue exertion, I do think ladies' over-hand service is a great waste of strength.

There is a very important point to be remembered, particularly in match-playing, and that is not to allow anything to disturb your equanimity or put you off your game, such as a wrong decision of the umpire; for until a patent umpire, warranted not to make mistakes, is invented, such things will occur, and should be taken in a sportsman-like spirit.

I am sometimes asked how I learned my own game. It is rather difficult to explain this, and perhaps I hardly know myself, but probably the following are some of the reasons: We are fond of games of all sorts at home, and when we began lawn tennis, a friend taught us to play hard and to practise hard, and to play with a proper net and proper balls, and to keep our courts in good order. Also we have been every year to see the best players, so that a good standard has been before us always. Then, there are just four of us at home, and

we can always practise among ourselves, and have never been out much to garden-party lawn tennis, so have not fallen into careless habits. Again, as we are fond of all sorts of occupations, we have plenty of other things to do besides playing lawn tennis, and do not, therefore, get 'stale,' or tired of the game, as I believe people who play and think of nothing else are apt to do.

There are few games in which ladies and gentlemen can join, therefore it is all the more necessary that ladies should try to improve their play and not spoil the sport for men, as they too frequently do.

Taking pains, I believe, is the whole secret. Don't play too much; but, whenever you do play, endeavour to play with the head as well as the limbs, so making the pastime worthy of both sexes, and, as such, not subject to disparagement from worthies of the old school, who do not know how scientific the game of lawn tennis has now become.

Finally, let us find encouragement in Burns's lines, 'Wha' does the utmost that he can, will whiles do mair.'

# CHAPTER XVII

## LAWN TENNIS IN AMERICA

BY R. D. SEARS (LATE CHAMPION OF AMERICA)

> There lies your way, due west.
> *Vio.* Then westward-ho!
> SHAKSPEARE, *Twelfth Night*, Act iii. sc. 1

JUDGING from the interest taken in lawn tennis to-day in the United States, it seems hard to realize that fifteen years ago the game was unknown there; yet it was the end of August in 1874 when the first set was laid out at Nahant, a small sea-side resort about ten miles from Boston. Dr. James Dwight and Mr. F. R. Sears, jun., were the first two lawn-tennis players in America. Dr. Dwight's name is familiar to all who take any interest in the game either in England or America, while Mr. F. R. Sears, jun., is an elder brother of the writer.

During the autumn of 1874, the game was looked upon chiefly as a curiosity, only a very few, indeed, knowing what it was called. In fact, the writer overheard an old countryman one day telling a friend that it was an English game called cricket.

It is rather a curious coincidence that another set was imported the same autumn by Mr. Sherman of Newport, but this was not set out until the following spring.

In the spring of 1875, beside the set at Nahant, and the one at Newport which has just been mentioned, there was one at New York, and in the early summer two more were laid out at Newport. All of these sets were owned by private people, and at that time none of the cricket or base-ball clubs had taken the game up. The set in New York was owned by Mr. E. H. Outerbridge, who is to-day one of the Executive

Committee of the National Lawn Tennis Association of America. Mr. Outerbridge obtained permission from the Staten Island Cricket and Base-ball Club to lay this set out in a corner of their grounds, and, naturally, this did more to bring the game into prominence than anything else, as it was the first set laid out in a more or less public place.

With an American's innate love for competition, it was not long before tournaments were commenced, though there are no records of them, that the writer has been able to obtain, before 1880. Up to that time all the matches were private affairs held on private grounds, or else club tournaments open to members only.

But early in the summer of 1880, the Staten Island Cricket and Base-ball Club gave an open tournament on their grounds near New York. Mr. O. E. Woodhouse, the English player, was in New York at the time, and entered for the tournament. He won the cup with very little difficulty. The Staten Island Club called this a tournament for the championship of America, but as there were two or three other tournaments held by different clubs the same year, and as each club called their tournament the championship, it would be very hard to allow the title to anyone for that year. The scoring in the Staten Island tournament was by the old method, which was identical with the scoring in rackets. The Staten Island Club only called for two games, however, and then added up the points made by each player, and the one who had the largest total number of points was declared the winner. In the doubles, Dr. James Dwight and Mr. R. D. Sears of Boston were entered, and on their arrival at the grounds they found the balls to be used were not more than two-thirds the size of the balls which they had been playing with. The Boston men had been playing with an English ball, the same that had been used in the English championship. Dr. Dwight protested that the Staten Island ball was neither of the regulation weight nor of the regulation size; while the Staten Island Committee argued that it must be all right, as it had the word 'Regulation' stamped

across it in coloured ink. This argument they held to be conclusive, and the Boston men were told that they might play or not, as they chose, but that no other ball could be used. They tried to play, and after defeating a Canadian pair (who were also accustomed to the English ball), they were somewhat easily defeated by a local pair.

The nearest approach at this time to an open event, outside of this Staten Island tournament, was a challenge sent by the Young America Cricket Club of Philadelphia to the Staten Island Cricket and Base-ball Club for a four-handed lawn-tennis match.

This took place in Philadelphia during the autumn of 1880, and was won by Staten Island after a very close fight.

Mr. C. M. Clark—one of the Clark brothers who afterwards played in England—and Mr. F. Taylor played for Young America, and Messrs. Jas. Rankin and W. M. Donald made up the Staten Island team.

In this match, again, came up the question of balls, and this time another complication arose regarding the height of the net; the Philadelphians having played all the season with a net measuring 3 ft. 6 in. at the centre, while the Staten Island men had lowered theirs to 3 ft. Under these circumstances it stands to reason that no satisfactory results could be arrived at as regarded the comparative playing ability of men from different sections of the country.

The same year a tournament was held for the first time on the grounds of the Newport Casino; the same grounds which have since been yearly selected for the championship of the country. This tournament, however, was only open to members of the Casino Club. In October an open tournament was held at Beacon Park, Boston, for a challenge cup, to be won three times. This was the first challenge cup played for in the country, and was won by Mr. R. D. Sears. At this tournament the present style of scoring was used instead of the old racket style.

The result of all these matches and tournaments was that lawn tennis, which was gradually becoming popular, took a

tremendous step forward in public favour. People who did not play now began to take a lively interest in the game, and before the next season opened the United States National Lawn Tennis Association had been formed. The formation of this association, which has played such a prominent part in American lawn tennis, was mainly due to the efforts of several of the more prominent players of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia; and foremost amongst them all was Dr. James Dwight, of Boston. The call for the meeting was sent out, not in the names of any individuals, but in the names of the most prominent clubs of that time—namely, The Beacon Park Athletic Association of Boston, the Staten Island Cricket and Base-ball Club of New York, and the All Philadelphia Lawn Tennis Committee of Philadelphia.

This meeting was held at the Fifth Avenue Hotel in New York on May 21, 1881. Thirty-three clubs were represented, and many matters were brought up to show that, if the game was to succeed in the United States, some definite rules must be adopted which would fully cover all such points regarding the weight and size of balls, the height of the net, and various other questions which had come up during the season of 1880. After some discussion, the rules of the Marylebone Cricket Club and the All England Lawn Tennis Club were adopted bodily for the ensuing year, and a constitution and bye-laws were immediately drawn up. Mr. R. S. Oliver, of the Albany Lawn Tennis Club, was elected the first president, and Mr. C. M. Clark the first secretary and treasurer. A vice-president and an executive committee of three were also elected, all of whom were to serve for one year. It was decided to hold a championship tournament for both singles and doubles during the summer, and the meeting then adjourned.

In the early part of June this executive committee held a meeting, and decided to hold the championships at Newport, Rhode Island. The object of the formation of this association was to have some central representative power which should be universally recognised in all lawn tennis matters in

the United States. It should have the power to make the American tennis laws and playing rules, and revise them whenever it seemed necessary. It should settle all points of lawn-tennis law, and should interpret the meaning and bearing of the rules in all disputed cases.

This association was universally welcomed, and its powers were admitted and obeyed at once.

The date set for the first recognised championship of the United States was August 31, 1881. This was, perhaps, the most interesting tournament in a way ever played in America. The courts were in very good condition, and the players and spectators knew absolutely nothing of the abilities of the different contestants. It was a strange coincidence that both Mr. R. D. Sears and Dr. James Dwight, who took all their practice together, should this year have decided to play the volleying game instead of the old base-line style of play, as Mr. W. Renshaw in England had won the All England Championship of that year by precisely the same tactics, though neither of the Boston men was aware of it at the time. Dr. Dwight did not enter in the singles, though his name was down with Mr. Sears for partner in the doubles. There were twenty-two entries in the singles, and fifteen in the doubles. All the matches were the best of three sets, but the present rule of vantage sets was then not known. No challenge cup was offered, but medals were given to be won outright in both the singles and the doubles. The styles of play shown during the tournament were the most varied ever seen here. Every man in the singles, except Mr. Sears, played the base-line game; and Mr. Sears' game was the most curious style of volleying imaginable. The base-line players would almost invariably drive the ball hard over the centre of the net, that being the lowest point; and Mr. Sears, armed with a racket weighing at least sixteen ounces, and holding it very short in the handle, would simply stop the ball. Lobbing had not been thought of then, as Mr. Sears' style of game was so wholly unexpected, and the harder his opponent's balls were

struck, the harder they went back. He stood up a little nearer the net than the service-line, and placed the ball first in one corner and then in the other, and his adversary went see-sawing across the court. Then, again, the service was thought a great advantage, and about half-a-dozen of the players did nothing but serve under-hand twists. The others served a very poor imitation of the present over-hand stroke. Mr. Sears' peculiarity of game, as much as anything else, won him the championship that year.

In the doubles it was a different story. The Philadelphia teams played one man close up to the net, and Messrs. Dwight and Sears tried the same style of game which is generally played to-day, except that their volleying had so little force that the opposing net man would return the ball almost invariably, and, with a slight turn of the racket, would kill the ball close to the side-line. The rest of the pairs played side by side from the back of the court. Messrs. C. M. Clark and F. Taylor of Philadelphia finally came off victorious without much difficulty, the only pair troubling them at all being Messrs. Newbold and Van Rensselaer, who were also Philadelphians, and who played the same style of game as their fellow-townsmen.

The tournament was a success in every way, and increased greatly the interest in lawn tennis which had started the year before.

During the winter months following the championship of 1881, nothing was done in the way of lawn tennis, as indoor courts had not then come into use in America; but early in the spring of 1882, the Association, which during the year had grown both in strength and importance, held its second meeting in New York to discuss matters for the following season. The rules were left about as they were, and the only changes in the list of officers of the Association was the election of Dr. Dwight as president, and Mr. Rush as secretary and treasurer.

Very soon after the meeting the grounds began to get into

condition again, and speculations as to the result of the next championship began to be made. The championship was held August 30th, at the Newport Casino, and there were forty entries for the singles and fifteen for the doubles; an increase over the year before of eighteen in the singles, while the doubles just held their own. Dr. Dwight entered this year in the singles as well as in the doubles; and, of course, this lent extra interest to the tournament, as there was a great deal of discussion as to the relative powers of the Doctor and Mr. Sears. Unfortunately, the Doctor retired in the third round, in order to nurse a lame ankle, as he cared more about trying to win the doubles from the Philadelphians than he did for his chance in the singles, and he felt that the work of both events was more than his lame leg could stand. The style of play from the back of the court, which had so many exponents the year before, was conspicuous by its absence this year, all but two or three of the forty entries rushing up to the net and trying the volleying game. Mr. Sears, however, had the advantage of having got a good start in this style of play the year before, and again won. In the doubles, Messrs. Dwight and Sears were successful this year, defeating the champions of the year before, two sets to none. The champions of 1881 still played their old style of putting one man close to the net, but the volleying of the Boston men had increased so much in severity that the play was too quick for this net man.

Though there were other tournaments held after the championship, they were not of enough importance to be mentioned here.

During the winter of 1882 and 1883, a few courts were laid out in empty halls and armouries, and some of the players kept up their practice indoors. But even up to the present time there are no courts like the English covered courts, the nearest approach to them being the tennis building in New York.

At the Association meeting in the spring of 1883, the officers of the preceding year were re-elected, and the number of clubs that were members of the Association still kept on

increasing. The entries for the championship this year fell off considerably; for, though there were several new men entered, still more of the older ones had dropped out. The singles were again won by Mr. Sears, defeating Dr. Dwight in the final round; and the doubles were won once more by Messrs. Dwight and Sears. The first year's champions in doubles had dissolved partnership, and Mr. J. S. Clark had taken Mr. Taylor's place. But the Clark brothers were not among the entries, as they were playing in England.

A few months after the close of the championship, Dr. Dwight went over to England, and in the early part of the winter Mr. Sears followed him. The visit of these two gentlemen had an important effect on the game in America, because, after consultation with some of the leading lawn-tennis players and rule-makers in England, they were able, on their return home, to arrange the American rules of the game to coincide more nearly with the English. They reached America just in time for the championship, which was held as usual at Newport, and were able once more to hold their respective positions. This year the champion was debarred from the singles and required to defend his title.

The meeting of the Association in the spring of 1885 was very important in various ways—in the first place, because the Association offered for the first time a challenge cup; next, because a discussion arose about changing the place of holding the championship from Newport to some place in the vicinity of New York; and, lastly, because a violent discussion took place about the ball.

As regarded the place of holding the tournament, those favouring the vicinity of New York were finally convinced that as long as the date of the championship was fixed for the end of August, it had much better be played where it always had been; but the opponents of the Ayres ball were not so easily managed. Some objected to the expense of importing them; others complained that Ayres did not send out his best balls; while still another set took up the patriotic side of the question

and said that we could make just as good a ball as Ayres, and that we ought to support the home article. The question was finally put to the vote and carried, the Ayres ball was thrown out, and a ball made by Peck and Snyder of New York adopted as the regulation ball for 1885. By the best players this new ball was condemned from the very outset; it very soon became evident to all that as the season advanced the ball degenerated, and by the date of the championship the ball was so bad that the champion thought seriously of not defending his title. He finally decided to play, however, and succeeded in retaining the championship for another year.

This, as has been mentioned before, was the second year in which the champion stood out, and it was universally conceded that the interest in the tournament was increased thereby. The winner of the All-comers' prize was Mr. G. M. Brinley, of Trinity College.

In the doubles, Mr. Sears was left without his old partner for the first time since the beginning of the championships, Dr. Dwight being in England. Mr. C. M. Clark was also absent this year, owing to illness; as that left both Mr. J. S. Clark and Mr. Sears without partners, they decided to join forces, and were successful in winning the championship.

The year of 1885, also, saw one more innovation, which should be mentioned before going further. By permission of the Executive Committee of the National Association, the St. George Club of New York was allowed to give the title of championship of the Middle States to their annual tournament. This was the first attempt at holding sectional championships, and was most successful in every way.

As soon as the Association held its annual meeting in 1886, the Peck and Snyder ball of the year before was thrown out, and the Ayres ball re-adopted. This was the only important change. The championships were held as usual at Newport during August, and Mr. Sears again retained his title, defending it this time against Mr. R. L. Beeckman of New York. Mr. Dwight had returned from his trip of the year before, and,

joining again with Mr. Sears in the doubles, won back the championship.

The tournament given in 1885 by the St. George Club, for the championship of the Middle States, had proved so successful that it was now decided to make it an annual fixture, while the New Haven Lawn Tennis Club were allowed the privilege of holding the championship of New England on their grounds in New Haven, Connecticut.

1887 was a year of changes. At the annual meeting in March a new board of officers were elected, and Mr. R. D. Sears was made president, with Mr. J. S. Clark secretary and treasurer. During the past year the Boston firm of Wright and Ditson had been experimenting with balls, and finally Mr. Ditson made successful arrangements with the same German firm that supplies Ayres with his uncovered balls to send the same ball out to America. When the Peck and Snyder ball was given up, the trouble was found with the ball itself and not with the cementing or covering; so that now that Wright and Ditson had as good a ball as could be obtained anywhere, all the players who had opposed the Peck and Snyder ball were ready to cast their vote for the Wright and Ditson ball. It was an easy matter to adopt this new ball, not more than ten minutes being spent in discussion. The ball proved perfectly satisfactory, and is still the regulation in the United States. With this adoption, the question which had been wrangled over for about three years died a natural death.

But the question of holding the championship near New York instead of at Newport was by no means settled. When this had first been suggested two years before, it had been voted down by the fact that the New York delegates were divided in their opinions, while the combination of Philadelphia and Boston had too much influence for the New Jersey men, who proposed the change. This year the New Jerseyites had modified their request, and asked for a separation of the singles and the doubles. They suggested having the singles at Newport and transferring the doubles to Orange, New Jersey. It had

always been the custom at Newport to play at least one round of singles and one round of doubles a day, and in 1886 the matches had been changed from the best of three to the best of five sets. Considering the Newport climate, this was a very severe strain on anyone, and the New Jersey delegation found that a large majority of those who had opposed an entire change of place were quite ready to compromise and divide the two events. Some few still opposed any change from Newport, but when they found that the only alternative was to return to matches of the best of three sets, they gave way. The singles, therefore, were held as usual in Newport in August, and this year Mr. H. W. Slocum, jun., was the winner of the All-comers. He was unsuccessful, however, in his attempt to take the championship away from Mr. Sears. Now, for the first time since the inauguration of the American championships, the Association removed the scene of one of its events to Orange, New Jersey. It was not such an unqualified success as its supporters had hoped for. The entries were not as numerous as had been expected, and the exhibition of play was wretched.

The date of the tournament was three weeks after the single championship; and as all of the players cared more about the singles than anything else during the year, they had neglected to keep in form or condition. It was a decided anti-climax. Messrs. Dwight and Sears again won the championship, but did not show such good form as they had in former years. In fact, the writer's criticism of the play shown in the doubles that year was not 'Good and better,' but 'Bad and worse.'

The sectional championships had grown considerably since the year before, and in 1887 there was a Middle States championship, a New England championship, a championship of the Western States, a championship of Long Island, and a Southern championship.

At the annual meeting of the Association held in New York during March, 1888, it was decided to change the office

of secretary and treasurer. This double office had been held by one man since the formation of the Association in 1881; but, owing to the increase in membership, it became too onerous for one man to attend to both of these duties. Mr. H. W. Slocum, jun., was therefore elected treasurer, and Mr. H. G. Badgley was made secretary, while Mr. J. S. Clark, the secretary and treasurer of the preceding year, was made vice-president. The main question which came up before the meeting for discussion was the location for the doubles. A great deal of complaint was made about the accommodation for the players at Orange, where the event had been played the year before. There was only one hotel in the place, and the majority of the players were forced to travel back and forth from New York each day. As the Orange grounds were very good, and as their committee had done all they could to please players and spectators alike, there were a great many who favoured going back there another year. The lack of suitable accommodation, however, proved too strong an argument, and it was decided to try the Staten Island Club, and the date was set to play the match three weeks after the singles, as had been done the year before. As the time for the singles drew near, it was definitely learned that Mr. Sears would be unable to defend his title for the first time in the history of the championship. He had met with an accident to the muscles of his neck the year before, and by neglecting it for some time, he was obliged to undergo a surgical operation. On recovering from this, he began playing again, contrary to the advice of his surgeon, who ordered a longer rest, and he was again hurt, and this time he underwent three operations before getting out. It was, therefore, an understood thing that the winner of the All-comers' prize would also take the championship cup by default. Mr. H. W. Slocum, jun., the winner of the All-comers' in 1887, was successful in this, the runner-up being Mr. H. A. Taylor. In the doubles at Staten Island, Dr. Dwight, being deprived of his old partner, did not play, and it fell to the lot of Messrs.

O. S Campbell and V. G. Hall to win the double championship.

The next meeting of the Association saw several important changes. In the election of officers, Mr. J. S. Clark was elected president; Mr. Slocum, vice-president; Mr. V. G. Hall, secretary; and Mr. H. A. Taylor, treasurer; and the Executive Committee, which numbered seven before, was increased to nine. This was deemed necessary, owing to the large increase in membership. In 1881, there were thirty-three clubs members of the Association; in 1889 there were over eighty. The Association in 1889 also started a new class of members. Formerly, the membership was composed entirely of single clubs, while it now includes associations of clubs as well. This was done in order to encourage sectional associations, such as the Southern, the Western, the Intercollegiate, &c. Furthermore, there was nothing to prevent these associations from making their own rules, laws, &c., as long as they were not connected with the National Association, and there was the same reason for the existence of some bond between them as there had been for some bond between individual clubs in different parts of the country at the time of the formation of the National Association.

Another important motion was carried, authorizing the holding of a ladies' championship in Philadelphia. Some time before this, a tournament was held there purporting to be for the ladies' championship, and was won by Miss Townsend. In 1889, however, Miss Townsend actually won the title in a tournament under the auspices of the National Association. Her most formidable rival, Miss Robinson, was unfortunately not among the entries, being in Europe at the time. The meeting in 1890 between these two ladies is sure to be interesting.

Another important change made was in holding the doubles in July instead of September. In September there had always been noticed a certain lack of interest among the players. Moreover, the days are very short, and therefore the light was

bad; while in July we have some of the longest days of the year. The change proved more successful. The tournament was again played at Staten Island, and although the entries were not much better than they had been in 1887, the play was much improved. Messrs. Hall and Campbell, the champions of 1888, were forced to yield their title to Messrs. Slocum and Taylor, but not without a struggle. At Newport, Mr. Slocum was successful in the defence of his championship, the winner of the All-comers' being Mr. Q. A. Shaw, jun.

Below I give a table of the championship matches since their inauguration. It must be borne in mind that in the doubles the champions did not stand out, but were compelled to play through the whole tournament every year. The same was the case in the singles until 1884.

CHAMPIONSHIP OF AMERICA

*Singles*

| | Winners | All-comers | Runners-up |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1881 | R. D. Sears | — | W. E. Glyn |
| 1882 | R. D. Sears | — | C. M. Clark |
| 1883 | R. D. Sears | — | J. Dwight |
| 1884 | R. D. Sears | H. A. Taylor | W. V. S. Thorne |
| 1885 | R. D. Sears | G. M. Brinley | P. W. Knapp |
| 1886 | R. D. Sears | R. L. Beeckman | H. A. Taylor |
| 1887 | R. D. Sears | H. W. Slocum, jun. | H. A. Taylor |
| 1888 | H. W. Slocum, jun. By default. | H. W. Slocum, jun. | H. A. Taylor |
| 1889 | H. W. Slocum, jun. | Q. A. Shaw, jun. | O. S. Campbell |

*Doubles*

| | Winners | Runners-up |
|---|---|---|
| 1881 | C. M. Clark<br>F. Taylor | A. Van Rensselaer<br>A. Newbold |
| 1882 | J. Dwight<br>R. D. Sears | G. M. Smith<br>C. A. Nightingale. |
| 1883 | J. Dwight<br>R. D. Sears | A. Van Rensselaer<br>A. Newbold |

*Doubles*— continued

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1884 | J. Dwight | A. Van Rensselaer |
| | R. D. Sears | W. V. R. Berry |
| 1885 | J. S. Clark | H. W. Slocum, jun. |
| | R. D. Sears | P. W. Knapp |
| 1886 | J. Dwight | G. M. Brinley |
| | R. D. Sears | H. A. Taylor |
| 1887 | J. Dwight | H. A. Taylor |
| | R. D. Sears | H. W. Slocum, jun. |
| 1888 | V. G. Hall | E. P. MacMullen |
| | O. S. Campbell | C. Hobart |
| 1889 | H. W. Slocum, jun. | V. G. Hall |
| | H. A. Taylor | O. S. Campbell |

Though there is nothing more to be said about the history of lawn tennis in America, something should perhaps be said about two of the playing rules which differ from the English. The first of these is in reference to the position of the front foot of the server. In the English rule, the server must have his front foot on the base-line: in America, this foot must be on the line or perpendicularly above it. In the old rule about serving, the front foot was allowed to be inside the base-line, and the moment the ball touched the racket, the server would run forward to volley the return. Oftener than not, the server would run forward when he threw the ball up to serve it, instead of waiting until he actually struck it, and by so doing he would get a start of a yard or two, and the umpire would foot-fault him. The umpire often made a mistake, as he had to try to see two things at once—the rear foot of the server and the contact of racket and ball. The new rule was, therefore, made in England as a slight help to both umpire and server. Then the umpire began to call foot-faults on the server in this way: The server would place his front foot on the line, and then, as he raised himself on his toe to serve, his foot would go clear of the line unless he happened to have his toe itself on the line. Now, the server did not gain any advantage, and yet he was faulted. For this reason, in America, the addition of the words 'or perpendicularly above the line'

was made to the English rule. If anyone will make the trial, he will find that, if even the heel only of his foot is on the line, when he raises himself on his toe his heel will still be perpendicularly above the line, which is really all that is desired, and this slight addition to the rule makes the umpire's duty much easier and simpler.

The other rule that has been mentioned as differing from the English is as follows, and the writer (as well as several prominent American players) highly disapproves of it: 'In all matches, the play shall be continuous from the first service until the conclusion of the match, but upon application by either player, for reason or reasons which may seem adequate, to the referee, an interval, not exceeding two minutes, may be allowed between successive rests. If the interval be between successive sets, seven minutes may be allowed. The referee, at his discretion, may at any time postpone the match on account of rain or darkness, or may otherwise waive the provisions of this rule, on the expressed consent of both players. In any case of postponement, the previous score shall hold good. Where play has ceased for more than an hour, the player who, at the cessation thereof, was on the side of the net originally first chosen, shall have the choice of sides on the recommencement of play. He will stay on the side he chooses for the remainder of the set, and then alternate each subsequent set.

'The last two sentences of this rule do not apply when the players are changing every game.'

The last part of the rule has proved very satisfactory; but the first part, referring to intervals of rest in playing, has been very strongly commented upon by more than a few. Different referees have very different ideas about 'adequate reasons,' and last summer the climax was reached when, at several tournaments, and among them the championship, the referee thought loss of wind, &c., was an 'adequate reason.' The rule was made to cover such cases as broken rackets, broken shoe-strings, &c.; and if the rule is to remain, it should certainly

be made clearer, so that no such cases as occurred during 1889 shall occur again.

The rules of the two countries, with these two exceptions, are the same.

Before closing this chapter, it seems not out of place to comment on the general interest in the game. There is scarcely a private place in the country that has not its tennis set. All the large hotels at the various summer resorts have two or three courts marked out, and every city and town has its tennis clubs. In one of the large parks in New York, there have been over one hundred courts laid out at the same time. Knowing this, can anyone doubt the popularity of the game in the United States?

## CHAPTER XVIII

### ON UMPIRES

Have you scored me? Well.
SHAKSPEARE, *Othello*, Act iv. sc. 1

There is three umpires in this matter.
*Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act i. sc. 1

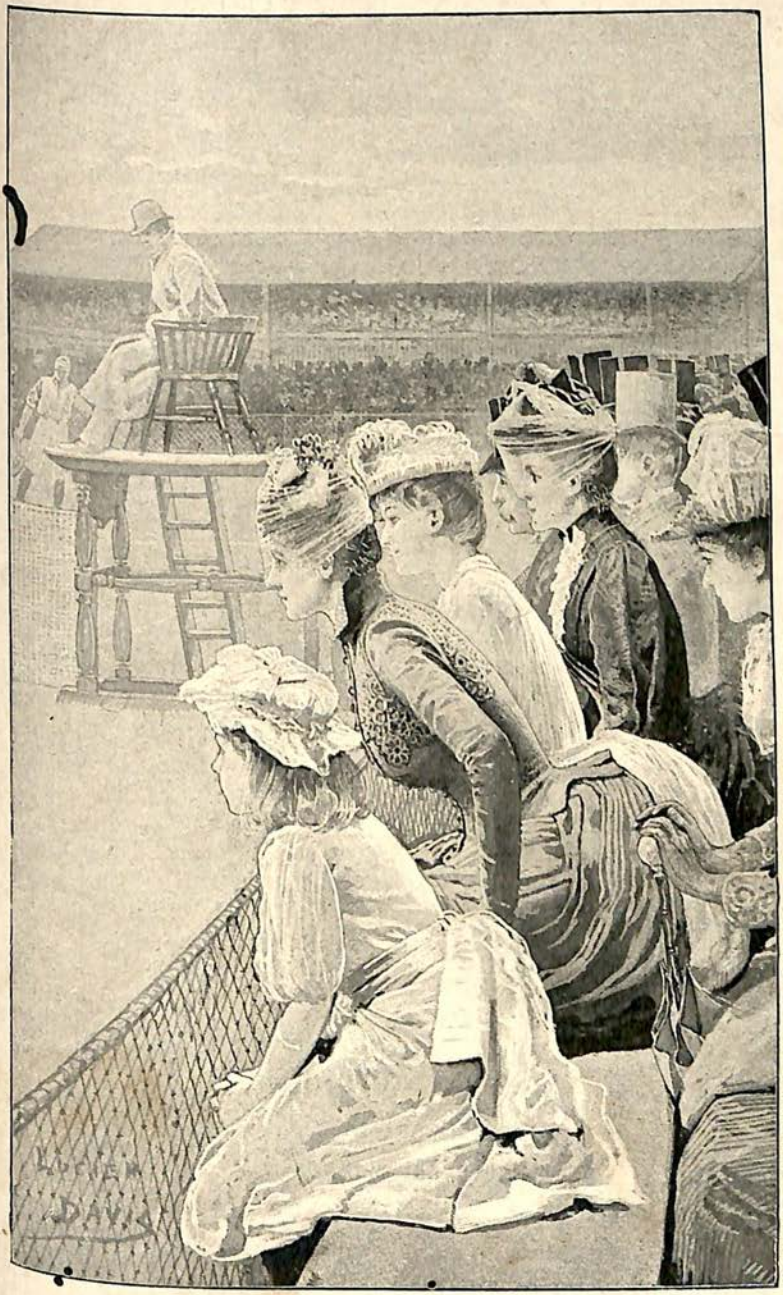
A CYNIC has summed up the case for and against the sex which comprises more than one half of the human race, by remarking that it is 'impossible to live with them, or to do without them.' Something of the same kind might be said with less discourtesy and at least equal truth of umpires at lawn tennis. It is one of the weakest points of the game that, not only is it impossible to do without them, but that so many are required. The fourth recommendation appended to the 'Regulations for the Management of Prize Meetings' runs thus: 'In important matches it is desirable to have seven line-umpires in addition to the scoring umpire—namely, one for each base-line, one for each service-line, one for the half-court-line, and one for each side-line.' Eight umpires for one match! The referee may well consider that this consideration alone will prevent his lot from being a happy one. Other games make no such demands on the unselfishness of their votaries. At cricket two umpires, or, including the scorers, three or four, are all that are allowed. Tennis, rackets, football, billiards, are even less exacting in their requisitions, though in all of them there is a large professional class who may be, and generally are, pressed into the service, while in lawn tennis, for the present, no such class exists. In its absence players and referee alike are

compelled to put up with what they can get, and to make the best of it. It is impossible even to say that any one of the eight is really superfluous, though, from the necessity of the case, many of them must frequently be dispensed with. The scoring-umpire will find that the further side-line is almost impossible to judge correctly from his seat, and the base-lines come next to it in difficulty, the task of watching simultaneously the foot of the server and the service-line being especially hard; so that three line-umpires would appear to be almost, if not quite, essential to accurate marking. It is well pointed out by Dr. Dwight,[1] that the 'umpire is an unfortunate necessity, and his first object should be to make himself as little conspicuous as possible, and to annoy the players as little as he can.' The duties of umpires and the mode in which they are to keep the score are defined at length in the 'Regulations for the Management of Lawn-tennis Prize Meetings,'[2] and it would be tedious to discuss them in detail. Only a few general principles may here be laid down for their guidance. The most important is a thorough knowledge of the laws and of the regulations generally, as well as of the conditions of the particular match, without which no umpire can perform his function satisfactorily. He must ascertain that the net is at the right height before the commencement of play, and measure and adjust the net during play, if asked to do so, or if, in his opinion, its height has altered; but few things are more annoying to players than unnecessary interruptions for this purpose. He should say nothing whatever unless an appeal is made to him, until the ball has dropped out of court, and in that case, the moment it has touched the ground, he should call 'Out!' loudly and distinctly, so that the players may be sure to hear him. When he has a reasonable doubt, let him direct the players to 'play it out,' and at the conclusion of the rest he can either ask the opinion of the line-umpire or decide the point himself. But if the question be really one for his own judgment, he will generally act wisely if he give his verdict at once. The decision

[1] *Lawn Tennis*, p. 69. [2] See Appendix, p. 452.

of the moment will in most cases be right, while any attempt to argue the matter out in his own mind will only tend to confuse him. He should follow the ball with his eye the whole time, and with the greatest attention, instead of watching the line. If he adopt the latter course it will often be extremely difficult for him to judge on which side of the line the ball has dropped. He should not allow himself to be influenced by the fact that the player, being uncertain whether the ball will drop in or out of court, has taken it at the half-volley. The writer once had to play two long and quite unnecessary sets because, in the arrogance of the moment, he returned at the half-volley a ball which dropped out of court, and in fact determined the match in his favour, but which the umpire naturally concluded to be in play because it was returned. Whatever he does, let him under no circumstances appeal to the bystanders. If he do so, he will probably get two prejudiced opinions, both—if such a thing be possible—wrong; and if, when he has given a decision, he should hear, as he certainly will, the outspoken comments of the crowd, he should be as though he heard them not. He should enforce the rules strictly, and send for the referee at once whenever any question of law arise. It is not the duty of an umpire to point out reasons for his decision unless he be asked a definite question. There is even in that case nothing in the laws or regulations to compel him to do so, but it is conceived that he may legitimately, after calling a fault, on being asked the reason, explain that the service was delivered from the wrong court, or that the server's foot was not on the line, though no direct authority to do so is given him. There is certainly nothing requiring or authorizing him to volunteer the information.

In the four-handed game, on the contrary, if a player serve out of his turn the umpire is expressly ordered 'as soon as the mistake is discovered by himself or by one of the players, to direct the player to serve who ought to have served.' The law is silent as to whether he ought to interfere if he sees that a mistake of this kind is about to be made, but the wording of



THE UMPIRE'S SEAT

the law, by casting upon him the initiative, lends some probability to the belief that he is intended to prevent as well as to rectify an error. It would appear, further, that a service delivered by the wrong partner ought to count as a fault, but there is nothing in the laws to make it so. A rest played out and any fault served before discovery of the mistake is to be reckoned, and the contingency of the completion of a game is provided for, but it is clearly the duty of the umpire to interfere if possible before a stroke can be scored. Upon all other points the laws and regulations are sufficiently explicit, and the difficulties of umpiring relate, not to principles, but to the manner of applying them. The task is often a very arduous one, and players and spectators alike ought to endeavour to avoid every unnecessary addition to its difficulty. They should remember that in respect to discretion the umpire is exceptionally well placed for a view. He has been specially selected for the office and must be presumed to have an adequate knowledge of its duties. He is perched on a high if rather rickety seat, with nothing, except sometimes the player himself, intervening between him and the ball, and with nothing to divert his attention from it. In respect to competence, therefore, he should be invariably treated as capable of giving a sound decision. Most of the spectators, on the other hand, are singularly ill-placed for observing the ball, and their attention is constantly drawn away by other claims, such as conversation, dress, or other matches going on simultaneously; and though the players themselves can judge certain doubtful balls accurately enough, there are others on which they will be the first to admit that they can offer no certain opinion.

In respect of interest the umpire has a still greater advantage. Not to speak of the players themselves, whose relation to each other and to the score is such as to make an absolutely impartial attitude almost impossible, it must be remembered that the spectators are very frequently husbands, wives, brothers, sisters, or friends of the competitors, and that they occasionally increase the strength of their natural prepossessions

by the artificial stimulus of a bet. Umpires, on the other hand, do not bet, and ought, *prima facie*, to be credited with absolute impartiality.

In respect both to discretion and interest it follows that when there is a difference of opinion between the umpire and a player or spectator, the benefit of the doubt should be given to the former, and it is not in accordance with the best traditions of the game for an aggrieved competitor to stride up to the umpire and, brandishing the racket in his face, to demand in a stentorian voice whether he is ever going to decide a stroke rightly. Nor, when an umpire has had the misfortune to disagree with each player in turn, does it assist him in the performance of his duty to hear one of them mutter angrily to the other as he flings the balls across, 'Well! it is all right. That's one to each of us.' Nor again, when the umpire on appeal has pronounced 'Play,' is a little knot of spectators justified in murmuring, not in an undertone, 'Six inches over the line.' Yet these are no imaginary instances, but have been actually witnessed at public lawn-tennis matches, while less aggravated specimens of a similar tendency, though admitting of much excuse, are frequent, and must contribute in a marked degree to the notorious difficulty of obtaining umpires. It should always be remembered, also, that an umpire intends to do his best, that he has generally assumed his present position against his will, and only on repeated solicitation, and that he would much prefer the comfortable seclusion of the stand to the dangerous dignity of the scorer's seat; and, after making all these allowances for his shortcomings, it will be well, in the plenitude of Christian charity, to add yet one more, and to recollect, even when he has decided the stroke against you, that he is still a fellow-creature entitled to so much consideration as is due to the fact that, after all, he is there for your pleasure and not for his own.

# CHAPTER XIX

## HANDICAPPING, AND THE MANAGEMENT OF PRIZE MEETINGS

If thou dost play with him at any game,
Thou art sure to lose; and of that natural luck
He beats thee 'gainst the odds.

SHAKSPEARE, *Ant. and Cleo.* Act ii. sc. 3

### I. HANDICAPPING

THE soothsayer who spoke these words to Antony must have had a low estimate of the handicappers of his day; and though too polite to attribute the result to anything but 'natural luck,' he held the opinion that with the most accurate adjustment of odds the better man has always something in hand. This is certainly true of lawn tennis. The stronger player, unless crushed by excess of odds, has always a reserve in service, skill, judgment, and confidence which will probably suffice in a close contest to turn the scale. Still, handicaps are so useful and so attractive that they now form an essential element in every important tournament save two. The duties of the handicapper are difficult and delicate in a high degree, and the precise method in which they are to be performed is a matter of pure discretion, often exercised upon insufficient information. Every year, however, the number of 'classed' players grows, and with regard to these the difficulty decreases, while in other cases the adjustment of odds is often merely conjectural. The principle of handicapping is an old one, and was first put in a practical shape in reference to lawn tennis by Mr. Henry Jones in a letter to the 'Field,' under date July 7, 1883. The bisque, now abolished, was the unit, and all the

possible degrees of merit were indicated by classes separated each from the other by one bisque. Since the substitution of quarters of fifteen for bisques, quarters must be taken as the unit, but the general principle will be the same. The regulations provide a series of classes of odds given and owed; in each case Class 0 is scratch, and Classes 1 to 12 receive or owe respectively the odds of one-quarter, two-quarters, &c., up to forty. Even this is not the limit of possible *owed* odds; for in 1889 Mr. W. J. Hamilton was required to owe fifty in addition to odds given. These classes are divided each from the next by one quarter, and are assumed to correspond with every possible quality of play. The handicapper has to distribute the competitors over these classes as equitably as public form, private information, or blank ignorance will allow; but when judging of the unknown he may fairly bear in mind that, before a handicap, players not unfrequently profess a more modest estimate of their capacity than on other occasions. Into the exercise of the handicapper's discretion, so far as relates to classing the competitors, it would be rash to intrude. Discretion is an autocrat and will not submit to dictation. The regulations direct that 'when the difference between the best and worst players is great (say more than thirty), it is desirable to handicap the best players at *owed odds*.' The first point is to ascertain the best player and put him at scratch; then the second best, and handicap him with the best. Next find the worst player; if he would not require more than thirty, the handicap may be made from the best player; but, should he need more, then the second, third, or fourth best may be placed at scratch, and the handicap made from him, those superior to him being required to owe what is necessary, and the inferior players receiving as many quarters of fifteen as correspond with the class in which they are placed. A player owing odds is required to win one or more strokes in each game, or, in the case of fractional odds, one stroke in the prescribed games, before his score reaches love; e.g. a player *owing* one-quarter of fifteen must win a stroke in the first and every subsequent

fourth game of a set before he can reach love, while the same odds when *received* are given in the second and every subsequent fourth game. The object of this is to prevent, wherever it is possible, the concurrence in the same game of odds given and owed, and to distribute them more evenly through the set. It will be seen by reference to the Regulations that a player at scratch gives to those below him precisely so many quarters of fifteen as there are classes between them, and a reference to Table No. 1 (p. 461) will show that, when the odds received by either player are small, the classes below scratch will meet at the difference between their respective odds; thus Class 2 (receiving two-quarters) will give to Class 6 (receiving fifteen and two-quarters) the odds of fifteen; but where greater odds are given a different principle is observed; e.g. Class 2 will give to Class 12 (receiving forty) not the difference between their respective odds, which would be thirty and two-quarters, but thirty and three-quarters. The reason is that two players, each in receipt of odds from scratch, do not start at the odds they receive, but the superior player starts at scratch; thus, if a player in Class 4 meets one in Class 8, they do not start at fifteen-thirty, but at love-fifteen. But the odds are calculated from the hypothetical scratch man, and as the game is longer than it would be if they started at fifteen-thirty, the better player has more opportunity in which to display his superiority. He is required, therefore, to concede one quarter more, and the terms on which these players actually meet are fifteen and one-quarter. These are called differential odds, and are so clearly expressed in Tables 1 and 2 that they require no further explanation.[1] A similar analogy is followed when two players meet who are both above scratch. Taking the same example as before, if players in Class 4 (owing fifteen) and Class 8 (owing thirty) are drawn together, the former will start at scratch. The game will then be shorter than if they started at owe thirty to owe fifteen, and by the application of the differential principle the superior player owes to his opponent not fifteen, but one-quarter less,

[1] See Appendix III. pp. 461, 462.

viz. three-quarters of fifteen. No such interference with the relation between classes is necessary where a player owing odds meets one who receives them, and these will start, therefore, at the positions they respectively occupy on the handicap list. In classing the entries it should not be supposed that the value of a stroke owed corresponds precisely with that of one received. The difference must be to some extent conjectural, but it will perhaps be safe in practice to put the ower as against the receiver of fifteen one class higher than that in which he would be placed if the values were equivalent.

In four-handed matches the task is more difficult. The strength of a pair must generally be very uncertain, but a basis at least can be obtained by first classing each player individually. The strength of any pair will be their united odds from scratch (expressed in quarters of fifteen) divided by two. If the strength so estimated is expressed by an uneven number, one-quarter must be added before dividing by two, and pairs will meet at the difference of their respective odds with the addition (or, if both pairs owe odds, the subtraction) of differential odds when the table requires them. Thus, if A, owing fifteen, and B, receiving fifteen and one-quarter, being partners, meet C, receiving fifteen and two-quarters, and D, receiving thirty and three-quarters, to ascertain the strength of A B, deduct the odds owed by A from those received by B. Add one-quarter to make an even number, divide by two, and the odds received by the pair from scratch will be one-quarter. Next add together the odds received by C and D, add one-quarter to make an even number, divide by two, and the pairs will meet at the difference between their odds thus ascertained, i.e. A B will give C D thirty. Again, A, owing forty, and B, receiving thirty, meet C, receiving fifteen, and D, receiving two-quarters of fifteen. The strength of the pair A B is owe two-quarters, and that of C D receive three-quarters, and they will accordingly owe and receive those odds respectively. In neither of these cases are differential odds required. One more instance may, therefore, be given in which recourse must be

had to the tables. A, receiving two-quarters, and B, receiving fifteen, have as a pair the strength of Class 3; C and D, receiving thirty and one-quarter and fifteen and three-quarters respectively, have the strength of Class 8; the difference between the odds of the two pairs would be fifteen and one-quarter, but a reference to the table shows that the odds required to be conceded by A B are fifteen and two-quarters. If all these players owed the supposed odds instead of receiving them, then by the agency of the differential table of owed odds they would meet on the terms of C D owing fifteen. This individual method of handicapping pairs is undoubtedly somewhat rough. It does not allow for the difference between men playing singly and in pairs, nor does it take account of the degrees of combined practice which a pair may have enjoyed. The arithmetical result will often require modification, but it at least provides some basis to work upon, and is therefore in my opinion safer than the rival method of classing pairs as such, which must generally be too conjectural to be trustworthy.

It may be observed that under the old system of bisques, the table from scratch to half-forty included sixteen classes, while the new tables, though calculated up to forty, include only twelve. From this it might be inferred that the old system admitted of more accurate adjustment of odds. But some of the old classes represented no real distinction, and the fluctuating value of the bisque in different hands and under different circumstances would of itself make this inference more than doubtful; and the variations of the standard of a man's play from one day to another are such as to make it probable that the division by quarters of fifteen is sufficiently close for all practical purposes, while it is almost certain that handicappers and players will prefer a classification which is uniform in operation and constant in value. A new and untried system will at first require on all hands patience and attention, and umpires must exercise great care to appropriate fractional odds to the prescribed games of a set; but it is conceived that the

difficulty will not be found to be excessive, and although the new method is not by the Regulations made compulsory on the managers of prize meetings, an earnest hope may be expressed that in the paramount interest of uniformity all committees will loyally adopt it.

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## II. ON THE MANAGEMENT OF PRIZE MEETINGS

By Herbert Chipp

There are three elements necessary to ensure a successful lawn-tennis meeting or tournament: 1, good players; 2, good courts; and 3, good management. To these three might be added a fourth—namely, good weather. But the climate acknowledges no human jurisdiction, therefore the question of weather must perforce be left out of consideration. Good management will secure good courts, and these combined will attract good players. It will, therefore, be the chief aim of these remarks to show how a well-managed meeting may best be brought about.

The first step to be taken is to appoint a tournament committee. It need not be, indeed it should not be, a large body; five energetic members will be found quite sufficient. Care, however, should be taken—and this is a point upon which too much stress cannot be laid—that these five members shall be, each and all of them, *workers*, and not spectators. Everything hinges upon that. I have known tournaments whose programmes have borne an astonishing, an overwhelming list of names, the bearers of which apparently considered that with their appearance on the front page their responsibility towards suffering lawn-tennis humanity ceased—they were merely ornamental; in many cases admirably ornamental, indeed, but they were nothing more. A committee of that kind will not produce a successful tournament. Now, having secured a good working committee, the next step is to choose a suitable date—by no means an easy matter. The tournaments—most of them old-

established and well tried—follow each other all over the land in an almost unbroken and recognised order from the middle of May until the middle of September, and it is becoming well-nigh impossible for a new meeting to obtain even part of a week which shall, so to speak, be fallow land. The best time in London is naturally the height of summer, but of course this is otherwise with country meetings. Earlier than the end of May is too hazardous in our fickle climate, and possibly the best month of all, both as regards the comfort of players and of spectators, is 'sweet September.' When once the date has been fixed it should forthwith be announced in the 'Field,' 'Pastime,' and other papers which devote space to lawn-tennis news. Then there is a heap of work to be got through, circulars and programmes to be issued, prizes to be bought, courts to be prepared, a thousand and one things to think of. I will take these in order.

*Circular.*—It is recommended by the Lawn-Tennis Association, in their Regulations for the Management of Prize and other Meetings, that the circular issued by the Committee should include certain particulars (*see* Recommendation 5). This circular should be sent to the chief players, and to the honorary secretaries of all lawn-tennis clubs, whose addresses may be found in the 'Lawn-Tennis Calendar'[1] and the 'Lawn-Tennis Handbook.'[2] And an advertisement of the meeting, to appear at stated intervals, should be dispatched in due course to those papers which interest themselves in the game.

*Programme.*—The circular deals with the meeting *in posse*, the programme relates to the meeting *in esse*; it records the daily doings when the tournament has actually begun. Each event, with its list of competitors and its prizes, should be clearly and simply set out, and the best way of reaching the ground indicated. If, in addition, a plan of the courts can be given, competitors and spectators will be greatly helped.

*Prizes.*—These have become a necessary evil, and must be

[1] Published at the offices of the *Field*.
[2] Published at the offices of *Pastime*.

accepted as such. There are many firms in London which lay themselves out for this special branch of trade, and I should recommend all country committees to bear this fact in mind when smitten with a desire to patronize the local tradesman. They will get far better value for their money in London.

A small section of the tournament committee—two will be enough—should be authorized to make the selection, for which purpose a sum of money should already have been voted. And it will be found that, as a rule, useful rather than ornamental articles are preferred. There should always be a clear understanding, when purchasing, that the prizes may be exchanged, at the option of the winners, for others of similar value. I wish here to call particular attention to Regulation 4, which prohibits the giving of cheques, orders for money, or cash payments in any form, and which further stipulates that the amount actually paid for each prize shall in no case be below the advertised value of the same.

*The Draw.*—The entries having closed, the draw remains to be made. This is generally done two days previous to the commencement of the meeting, in order that notice may be sent to the competitors, and to allow time for the printing of programmes, &c. The method of the draw is fully explained in Regulations 16, 17, and 18. A copy of the draw should be sent to the local papers, and to such other papers as devote space to reports of the game. Competitors have a right, by themselves or deputies, to be present at the draw.

*Balls.*—It is scarcely necessary to say that the balls should be supplied by one maker, and that only the best should be used. They should be kept in a tent apart, under the supervision of a committee-man, who should make it his business to see that they are not extravagantly used. For the ball item is usually a very heavy one, especially if bad weather prevails during the meeting.

*Ball-boys.*—These are most necessary to the comfort of the player, although the early stages of their education will probably occasion him not a little vexation. But he must be patient,

and his reward will come. Two boys should be told off to each court, one at each end, and their duty is to remove balls from the court between the rests, to collect the vagrant ones, and, in a word, to have a constant supply ready for the server. During the rests they should stand well back in one of the corners of the court, close to the stop-netting, and move about as little as possible while the ball is in play. Nothing is more disconcerting and annoying to a player than to hear, and occasionally see, a figure dodging about behind him. The ball-boy should be taught to throw the ball gently to the player, whom he should not approach too closely.

*The Courts, &c.*—It is most important that these should be as good as they can be made, for the success of the meeting will largely depend upon the trueness and the wear of the courts. They should, if possible, be marked out in rows, side by side, the ends facing north and south. Between, and at either end of, the courts, the Lawn-Tennis Association recommend certain margins, which should, if possible, be observed (*see* Recommendation 1). If the courts can be rested during the week previous to the meeting, so much the better. But it must be borne in mind that a greater mistake cannot be made than to leave any of them altogether unplayed upon. The centre court at Wimbledon some years ago was a proof in point. It had been jealously guarded—a virgin court—from play and players until the first day of the meeting. And then what was its condition? It was simply unplayable for the first day or two, until it had become consolidated by the constant tread of the players.

Where space will allow, there should be a few practice courts on which competitors can 'knock up,' but on no account should 'knocking up' be permitted on any of the match-courts.

I am inclined to recommend the doubling of the lines, so far as the service- and base-lines are concerned, for the extra width renders it easier for the single umpire to follow faults, &c. And during the early days of a meeting, save in very

important matches, more than one umpire is an unheard-of luxury.

And now it is necessary to add a word or two about the posts, nets, centre-stays, &c. These should all be of one pattern, and also the scoring-seats or umpires' chairs, which it will be necessary to procure. The stop-netting should, if possible, be 8 ft. high, with openings here and there for ingress and egress. A small quantity of sawdust, too, should be placed at either end of the court, near the stop-netting. And as at most meetings all the courts are marked out for doubles as well as singles, the side-posts converting the double into the single court must on no account be forgotten. Finally, it will save the committee much trouble if a contract is made with one of the large supplying firms, such as Ayres, who will provide all the appliances required, and send experienced men to put them up.

*Seating and other arrangements.*—Necessarily, these must vary with the formation of the ground. But a general idea may be given of the best way of arranging the seats. These should, if possible, be placed along the sides of the court, and not at either end. I am aware that the latter method prevails at nearly all meetings, and where 'gate' has to be considered, it is almost hopeless to protest against this arrangement. But it is nevertheless a very hateful one from a purely playing point of view.

If the courts can be roped, so much the better, though this is not always practicable.

Unless there be very ample pavilion-space available, it will be found necessary, in addition to the ordinary dressing accommodation for competitors, to provide a tent for the referee. If possible, it should command a full view of the ground. There should also be a tent for the committee, and, if there be room, one for the 'press.' I have already spoken of the 'ball' tent. Care should be taken to deal as kindly with the lady competitors as the resources of the club will allow.

*Referee and Committee.*—A very important person is the

referee, and his duties are clearly and fully laid down in the Regulations. He holds, as it were, the position of chief of the staff, and upon his shoulders most of the work of a tournament in progress falls. Whenever there arises any important question—apart from a point of law—he should at once summon the committee, of which during the meeting he is *ex officio* a member, and explain the matter to them. One member of the committee should be constantly at hand to help him in any emergency that may arise. Indeed, the fact should never be lost sight of, that it is the bounden duty of the committee to afford all the assistance in their power to their referee, whose office is no sinecure. To him each competitor must report his or her arrival on the ground. He, or his assistant, records the result of each match as the score-sheet is handed in to him, and for this purpose some large sheets of cardboard should be provided. These, showing the draw, and the result of each match, should be fastened to the notice-boards, one of which should be hung in the referee's tent, the other in some other conspicuous place. The programme of matches for the following day, the hour at which and the court in which they are to be played, should be made up each night, and the players informed thereof. The committee should see that there is a plentiful supply of scoring-books and lead-pencils at hand.

According to the Regulations, it is the duty of the committee, or of a member or members of that body, to allot the courts to the competitors, and to call upon them to play. But, as a matter of fact, this duty more often than not devolves upon the referee, acting with the tacit sanction of the committee. Umpires' books, otherwise scoring-sheets, numbered, one to each court, are handed by the referee to the umpires, to whom he should briefly explain the conditions of the match. And, in the case of handicap-matches, the odds—differential or otherwise—should be indicated by him in pencil on the scoring-sheet. Finally, the referee has to decide any point of law which an umpire may profess himself unable to decide, or which may

be referred to him on appeal from the decision of an umpire. His decision on any point of law is final.

In many, indeed in most cases, the referee is also the handicapper.

*Competitors.*—The first duty of a competitor is to be punctual, and to report himself on his arrival to the referee. His next is to do his best to win, to show himself equal to either fortune, and loyally to accept the umpires' decisions. If he carries out this programme in its entirety, he will have done much for himself and for his fellow-creatures.

*Umpires.*—This is a long-suffering race, and it has often been a wonder to me that it has not long since become extinct. If good, they may get a curt 'Thank you' as a reward for a possible three hours' sitting in durance vile; if indifferent, they are simply ignored; while for a bad umpire—and I fear his name is legion—there is no epithet yet coined which is sufficiently opprobrious. One mistake will outweigh hours of good decisions. Yet the umpire does not, as a rule, lay any claim to infallibility. In fact, he is generally a modest, mild-mannered man. A well-known player has publicly declared of umpires, that though they are a much-abused body his experience is that they fully deserve all they get. Perhaps he is right, but it must have required some courage to say it, in view of possible reprisals in court.

The duties of an umpire are so fully set forth in the Regulations that a few words will suffice here. He must necessarily be perfectly familiar with the game, must possess good eyesight, and should make himself acquainted with the conditions of the match over which he presides. He receives from the referee a scoring-book, which he returns to that official at the close of the match, after having duly signed his name at the foot of the scoring-sheet, for future reference, if needed. He should give his decisions quickly and audibly, and on no account allow himself to be argued with, either by players or spectators. He must devote his whole attention to the match which he is umpiring. But should it happen, as happen it occasionally

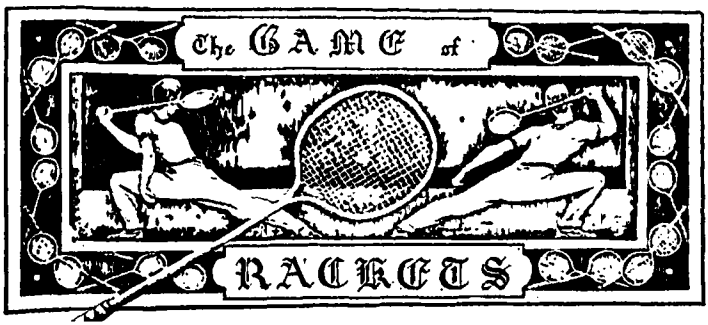
will, that he does not see a stroke regarding which an appeal is made, he should say so at once, and cause it to be replayed. Line-umpires must always be so placed as to look *along* the line which they are umpiring, *never* across it. There should really be as many line-umpires as there are lines. But, save in exceptional cases, it is almost hopeless to expect such liberal treatment. Still, if the match be of any importance, there should certainly be not less than three linesmen (for the further side-line, and the base-lines), in addition to the umpire-in-chief.

An umpire is not justified in appealing to the players regarding a doubtful stroke. If he is uncertain, the stroke must be replayed. Above all things, let him have the courage of his opinions.

# RACKETS

BY

E. O. PLEYDELL-BOUVERIE




# CHAPTER I

## THE ORIGIN OF RACKETS

THE game of Rackets [1] has not the same brilliant record as her elder and bulkier sister Tennis. A flirtation with the former seldom lasts more than a few years, while the latter attracts the ardent devotion of a lifetime. Nor is the reason far to seek. Rackets is essentially a game for the young, while the tennis player of mature years can still enjoy his favourite pastime.

I have said that tennis has a brilliant record. She has been truly called the game of kings, and, perhaps somewhat hyperbolically, the queen of games. She has had a statute directed against her in the reign of Henry VII. Although thus pronounced unlawful, she has been recommended by a king to his 'sonne, altho' but moderatlye, not making a craft' of her. Shakspeare has made frequent use of her for the purposes of metaphor. 'Certayne craftie persons,' perceiving the 'appetite'

[1] I have been impelled by a number of causes to the conclusion that there is some doubt as to my spelling of the word 'rackets.' I can only say that, whatever authority there may be to the contrary, there is the highest authority, living and dead, for the spelling which I have adopted.—E. O. P.-B.

for 'tenice' of Henry VIII., employed her to gain money from him in 'wagers.' In fact, for centuries she has almost always been treated with the greatest possible courtesy by those whose mere notice would have been sufficient to place her in the front rank of sports.

Her younger sister, on the other hand, has had no such advantages. Nobody up to date has ever in writing been so bold as to claim high rank for her. If she existed previous to this century, she has been passed by on the other side as a quean who, hid either in gaol or in the pot-house, was unworthy of notice by a respectable person. Where kings, in fact, played one game, the lowest persons in fiction played the other. The author of 'Pickwick' introduces a racket player whose dingy appearance is only equalled by the gloom of his surroundings. But though Henry VIII. and Charles II. play one game in a palace, and 'Smangle' plays the other within the walls of the Fleet, those facts render the manner in which rackets has come to the front all the more remarkable.

The two games have this much in common, that neither of them has had, as a rule, one of the distinctive elements of lawn tennis—the admixture of the gentler sex; and although in 1424 a certain Mdlle. Margot surpassed all men at 'palm play,' the original tennis, that is some time ago, and ladies of a more recent date have been content to rest on her laurels.

The growth and elevation of the game of rackets have been rapid, mainly perhaps because those who excelled in the pre-eminent institution of cricket placed a great part of their winter months at her service. Recently a considerable amount of vitality has been reinfused into her. The establishment of the amateur championship by the Queen's Club has drawn attention to her existence, and I think it may fairly be said that she now enjoys a considerable amount of popularity.

The history of the game is chiefly until recent times to be derived from negative evidence. Strutt, though he refers to tip-cat and 'northern spell' (knurr and spell?), makes no

mention of it, and how humble soever be the game of rackets, one would have thought that it would have ranked above 'tip-cat.' Turning to other authorities which shall be nameless—not because they would not be reckoned as authorities, but because their statements are so astounding that one would wish to know on what evidence they were founded—we find racket defined as being in its plural number 'the game of *tennis*'; and in another we read that rackets 'is not so universally pursued as cricket and football'—that may go, of course, unchallenged, but it would hardly be information to anybody, 'and is *essentially an indoor game* which is played only in prepared and *covered* courts.' How a game which for years, in the Fleet Prison, in the yard at Harrow, in the old court at Cambridge, was played in the open air without any plant except a floor and a front wall could be called '*essentially* an indoor game, played only in prepared and *covered* courts,' is somewhat surprising, and must greatly perplex the historian, who feels unable to rely on the accuracy of such authorities in other matters.

To give an account then of a game which has no laws—for, conventions apart, there are no rules governing the game in all places—which may be played in a court of any size with or without side walls—for conventions do not limit size—and no written history, is a task in which the would-be historian may well demand that more than a due share of allowance be made to him.

It is said that the game is of French origin. Inasmuch as ball-games were almost certainly played in France before they were played in England, that would seem to be in a certain sense true, but that the game of rackets was ever played in France is at any rate doubtful; indeed, I think it would be quite as correct to say of lawn tennis as of rackets that it is of French origin. They are developments, no doubt, from a common stock, but on intrinsic evidence I should be inclined to think that rackets is of British growth. No man, be he ever so devoted to tennis, can play that game by himself.

He may, it is true, practise certain strokes, but his return he cannot exercise. It may, too, perhaps be said to be unlikely that the Frenchman would want so to play any game. But rackets, though I do not for one moment suggest that the element of opposition is not inspiriting, has been and may be practised in solitude, which is a fact that many a Briton would take into consideration.

Rackets is really only a slight development of a game frequently played by children, who happen to have among their toys (and what child has not?) a ball and an instrument for hitting it. Armed with these, a child is put to play alone. It discovers that hitting the ball to a distance involves walking to a distance to fetch it. It enjoys hitting the ball hard, but does not enjoy running a long way after it. How are the two desiderata to be combined? Obviously by hitting the ball against a wall, and intelligently awaiting its return. The child, having thus attained its object, manifests such delight that another child wishes to share therein. The rules of equitable partition must be observed; thence arises a regulation that neither shall have a greater share of hits than the other, and the principle of alternation is obtained. Again, it is discovered that it is an advantage to have first hit, and to stand in a certain place. Equity demands that these advantages, too, must be shared. Assuming that nature leads us as far as this, it is but a short step to the game of rackets. The rule that a return to be good must be made before the ball has twice touched the floor was doubtless adapted from tennis, and the adaptation of the instruments of tennis for this game would spring from expediency, a faster flight being required from a ball which was of necessity to hit a wall before it came to the opponent, and a less unwieldy racket being necessary to meet such faster flight.

Whether the above view be worth consideration or not, the game exists, has flourished, and it is to be hoped will continue so to do. Moreover, it is less with speculative and prehistoric views, which would hardly arouse even languid hostility, than

with the practical side of the game of rackets that the writer wishes and intends to deal.

It would be wrong to ignore entirely the controversies on the word 'racket.' Some trace it through various stages from *reticulum*, which a passage in Erasmus's Dialogues, to which Mr. George Elliot (brother of the present Lord Minto) kindly drew my attention, would seem to support. Others derive it from a word meaning 'to dash against.' I should suggest for what it may be worth that it is a diminutive from the word 'rack,' stretching being of the essence of a racket, which diminutive form we find in many words—e.g. baronet, cellaret, and the like. But however such a thing may be, it is not a matter of much practical, or indeed historical, importance.

I am also indebted to Mr. George Elliot for the narration of an occurrence which testifies to the position of the game early in the fifth decade of this century. A friend of his had recently arrived in London from Canada, where he had become extremely fond of the game, and he persuaded Mr. Elliot to go with him in search of a court. They were directed to the 'Yorkshire Stingo,' in Marylebone Road, at which well-known public-house there was a court, but which after investigation they pronounced too bad for play. They then turned their steps to the Fleet Prison, where they had their game on compressed gravel against a rough brick wall, in the presence of the impecunious denizens of that place. Possibly their being able to play was due to the fact that this took place just previous to the destruction of the Fleet, when, according to Knight's 'London,' 'skittles and rackets were alike without worshippers.' Dickens in 'Pickwick' thus describes the court :—

'The area formed by the wall in that part of the Fleet in which Mr. Pickwick stood was just wide enough to make a good racket court; one side being formed, of course, by the wall itself, and the other by that portion of the prison which looked (or rather would have looked but for the wall) towards St. Paul's Cathedral. Sauntering or sitting about, in every possible attitude of listless idleness, were a great number of debtors,

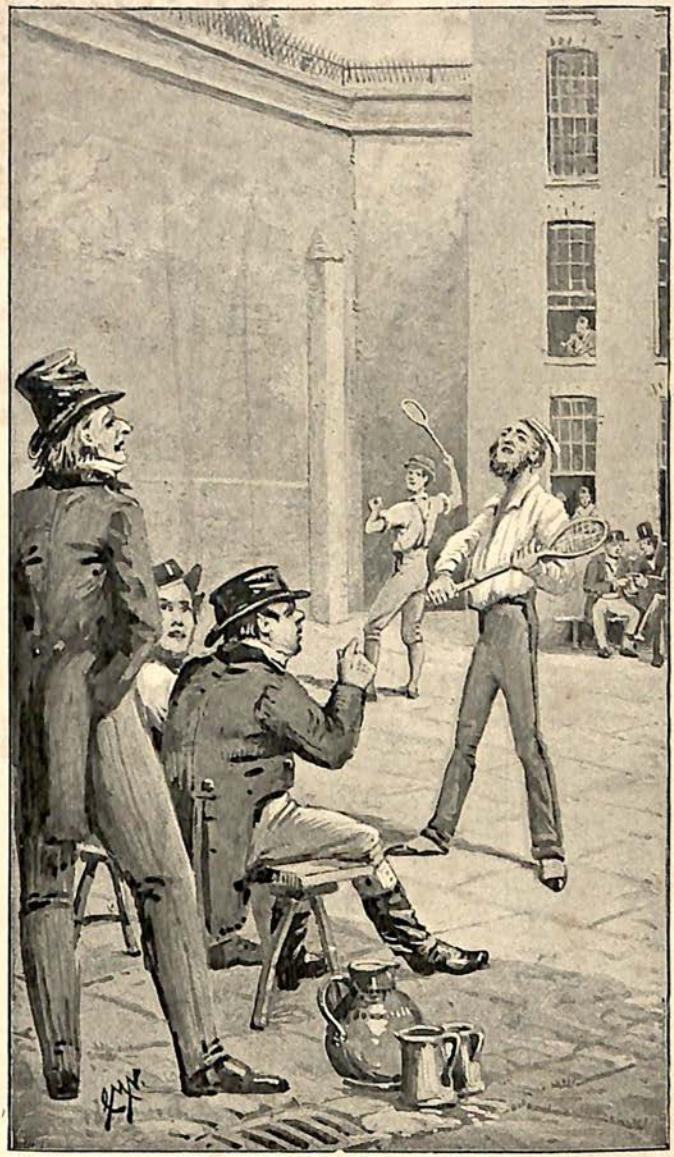
. . . . . some were shabby, some were smart, many dirty '—among whom I should expect to see our friend Smangle—'a few clean. . . . . Lolling from the windows which commanded a view of this promenade were a number of persons . . . . . looking on at the racket players, or watching the boys as they cried the game.'

There is too on the north side of Fleet Street a court which is still called 'Racquet (*sic*) Court,' and it is said that in old days there was a space at the back in which rackets was played. This place of amusement is said to have descended from some old popinjay grounds, in support of which it may be observed that a neighbouring public-house is still called the 'Popinjay.'

This old open court was very different from the modern four-wall game. On this question I should like to quote no less an authority than Sir William Hart-Dyke, the present Vice-President of the Council, who in his racket days earned the (I believe) unique distinction of being the only amateur who has ever beaten the best professional at his own sport, of which match more hereafter. I quote his words verbatim:—

'The close-court game has no doubt wrought changes for the worse so far as the best features of rackets are concerned. The game as played in open courts against a single wall was a severe test of skill and judgment in placing the ball, and accuracy as regards strength and measuring distance.

'In a four-handed match the players took alternately the "in" and "out" game, the "in" players picking up the drops and placing the ball, the "out" players defending the back of the court. This led to very long and exciting rallies, which tested to the full the skill, judgment, and strength of the players. This system of play obtained for some years after the establishment of close courts at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and of the inter-university matches at Prince's Club, Hans Place. The writer, Messrs. Daniel Ainslie, R. D. Walker, and others maintained the old open-court style, but the temptation afforded by a close court for hard hitting



DEBTORS' PRISON RACKET COURT

gradually superseded the old system, and replaced science and accuracy by simple force.

'Though there are still brilliant exceptions amongst some of our public school players, there is no doubt that this game, one of the best for testing eye, skill, accuracy, and condition, has lost much of its position owing to the modern style of play, in which the players all hit as hard as they can, regardless of that strength and judgment which are the only test of merit and success. The temper, skill, and patience required in all the heat and excitement of a contest to be able to drop a volley just in the one corner of the court where your opponent is not, I trust may long be recognised as worthy of cultivation by our young players.'

Nobody who has had the opportunity of seeing the stroke successfully made will dispute the opinion of Sir W. Hart-Dyke on this matter, but it may be pointed out that the perpetual hard hitting of which he complains is part of the general increase in pace in all matters of which we hear so much, and which perhaps we do not deplore so much as we should. Without travelling beyond the record of 'ball' games, what about tennis? Has not a player appeared and beaten everybody, the incontinence of whose successful slogging has overthrown all the prescriptive rights and duties of the model exponent of the game? It has been said that if Pettitt were content to play 'the game,' he would be an even more successful player than he is. The answer is, he cannot be more successful, as he is *princeps*—perhaps not *facile*, but still *princeps*.

With regard to the prettier game in the racket court, that game, I am inclined to think, is not for the multitude. As Sir W. Hart-Dyke says, it is a severe test of many mental qualities and requires a natural aptitude and an acquired skill that few possess.

The reader who has perused the remarks of Sir William Hart-Dyke about the open-court game will regret its decadence; for the game of rackets is now exclusively played in a court enclosed in four walls.

It was never the good fortune of the writer to see rackets played in the old-fashioned unenclosed court, the tactics of which game (*vide* Sir W. Hart-Dyke) were widely different from those employed in the more modern arena; but without any desire to speak slightingly of a game which was excellent but is obsolete, it would perhaps be as well to state at the outset that all observations (unless the context forbids) refer exclusively to the enclosed courts and the game there played. The old-fashioned idea of rackets was that there should be a court of one size for a four-handed and a smaller court for a single game. This has been obsolete for many years, and the game is now habitually played in the smaller-sized court. The old 80 ft. by 40 ft. court has been replaced by courts of about 60 ft. by 30 ft. Whether our forefathers were more actively inclined may be a question, but it has recently been found that there is quite sufficient exertion to be obtained by four people in a court of these latter dimensions. It is conceived—but on this no doubt opinions differ—that the smaller size of the court must have conduced to the lengthening of the bullies with less active players, and therefore to the improvement of the game in that respect.

A notice of this game must necessarily be incomplete which omits mention of the year 1886. It was an epoch in its history, for it was marked by the destruction of the courts of Messrs. Prince in Hans Place, which had been the headquarters of rackets for many years. In the month of September in that year was to be seen the melancholy spectacle of the miserable remains of the match court. The front wall was standing to the height of about three feet, and the area of the court was thickly strewn with building rubbish of all kinds. Repressing a tendency to moralise on the ruin of courts and the collapse of Prince's, it is conceived that nobody who is interested in the game can fail to deplore the loss of what was as good a court as could be imagined for the purpose of contests, but, at the same time, there seems to be a certain fitness in dealing with the game of rackets at a time which must be regarded

as the close of a period in its history. Recent enterprise has infused much life into it, and it is to be hoped that it is re-established on a substantial basis.

The length of the recently demolished match court at Prince's was 60 ft. by 30 ft. in breadth, and though there is, it is believed, no absolute rule on the subject, the majority of courts in England contain that amount of space approximately, the difference where it exists being inclined to a rather larger than a smaller area.

It does not come within the scope of this sketch to deal with the methods of construction of a racket court; suffice it to make this general observation with regard to courts when built, that he who learns to play will find it less difficult in a slow than in a fast court, and he who has learnt will derive greater pleasure from a fast than a slow. In fact, it may be taken as an axiom, the slower the flight the easier to strike, but the less satisfaction in striking: there is almost the same difference between the flight of a ball in a slow and a fast court as between the flight of a partridge walked up and driven, and the same principles apply to the pleasure of a successful stroke.

The first sight of the flight of a racket ball must surprise the beginner by its swiftness. That those who start to learn in the regulation court, with the regulation ball—as, for instance, the majority of Etonians—should arrive at a pitch of excellence has always filled the writer with admiration and astonishment. It will perhaps be said all things must have a beginning, and so they must, but it is suggested that Harrow provides what that beginning should be, and to anybody desirous of following the royal road to proficiency in the game, the writer ventures to recommend the Harrow course. Almost every boarding-house at Harrow has its miniature racket court, in which a game with a soft india-rubber ball is played. The way in which the courts are procured is simple and inexpensive. It so chances that nearly all the houses have a part where a blank wall runs at right angles to another; a line at the height of the board in a racket court is drawn across the blank wall, a sheet of asphalte is then

laid, and the court is complete. The game is very and deservedly popular. Familiarity with the flight of balls generally and with the handling of a racket is thus acquired, and if the player feels drawn in that direction—and those who become proficient at the soft-ball game usually do—he proceeds to the regular racket court, where it takes him a comparatively short time to adapt the knowledge and skill he has acquired to the requirements and the rapid flight of the orthodox racket ball. The soft-ball game is one that has penetrated to regions outside the ken of Harrow and Rugby. There are now in existence in England several private houses with a more elaborate 'squash' court attached, built indeed like a smaller hard-ball court. That this game is an excellent one the writer can testify, and it has obtained just popularity even amongst those who had been hitherto ignorant of the game in any form. The courts of this kind in which the writer has played are floored and side-walled with planks, and it must be confessed that the plank is a pleasanter surface on which to take violent exercise than the unyielding floor of asphalte or stone.[1]

A game somewhat similar with regard to local conditions was, and is still, much in vogue at Winchester. Lord Penzance, who was in the Winchester eleven in the fourth decade of this century, well remembers such a game being played with a bat shaped somewhat like a racket but entirely wooden, thin in the middle and thick at the end, and with a hard ball. Rugby can also boast a like institution. So excellent is the game and so simple and inexpensive the conditions, that the fact of its not being more popular is a matter for surprise.

And be it remembered that rackets has one advantage over tennis. He who is keen to improve will find himself the best possible opponent. To go into a racket court and knock the balls about alone is in the opinion of many good judges almost the best possible practice, whether for a tiro or a champion. The player thereby learns with accuracy the flight of the ball, for he finds out what velocity is given by what amount of force.

[1] See note p. 405.

He can practise that stroke in which he is weakest, and he learns to change hands from fore to back, or *vice-versâ*, with rapidity. Moreover the beginner can do harm to nobody but himself. Lest it should be thought that the writer advises solitary confinement for an indefinite period in a racket court, he hastens to add that probably ten minutes or a quarter of an hour of such a game will be found sufficient for the purpose both of producing a genial glow and of improving or rubbing up the skill of the performer.

Although for the best of all reasons Shakspeare cannot be claimed as making reference to this game, which was still *in gremio*, it would indeed be strange if some couplet of his did not fit the case; and to a racket player, when a boy at Harrow, that devotee of all sports and games, Lord Charles Russell, sent the following lines on the occasion of his instituting a medal for the knowledge of the works of the poet:—

> 'It will be pastime passing excellent,
> If it be husbanded with modesty.'

The present position of the game in the world at large would perhaps seem to render such a caution unnecessary; but should the lack of modesty appear the old moralist would apply his proverb, culled no doubt from the game of tennis but smacking more of the jargon of rackets, and of which certainly the racket player can appreciate the metaphor: 'Thou hast stricken the ball under the line.'[1]

Any notice intended to be in the nature of a slight historical sketch would be incomplete without some chronicle of those events by which the course of the game of rackets has been marked.

As has been said, the Debtors' Prison was probably the penurious cradle in which the game was reared, and it is certainly an argument in favour of its intrinsic merits when we

[1] Heywoode's Proverbs, 1566, meaning, 'You have failed in what should be your purpose'—i.e. in this instance to pass the time without results to be deprecated.

find the rapid growth of its popularity, owing nothing as it did to its gloomy and dingy origin. It may be that that growth has not been maintained of recent years, but that it had at one time reached great popularity nobody will deny. It is alleged that Mr. (now Sir William) Hart-Dyke, who beat Erwood for the championship in 1862, adds to his other distinctions that of being the first champion racket player who was not born in and bred under the influence of the Debtors' Prison.

It is a curious coincidence in the history of the game that its emancipation from the area of a gaol should be almost contemporaneous with its incarceration within four walls, for it was about this time that the close court finally superseded the old-fashioned open court in all matches of importance. One great and obvious advantage of the change was that a roof, rendering the players independent of the weather, was almost always added, though to this day the two old courts [1] remain below the schoolyard at Harrow with side and back walls and no roof, and much play when the weather was fine used to take place in them.

[1] One of them has recently been divided into a number of 'squash' courts.

## CHAPTER II

### PROFESSIONAL PLAYERS

As far as can be gathered from the scanty records of the game, it was in the year 1820 that it first occurred to anybody, and to Robert Mackay in particular, to think the title of champion racket player worth claiming. And it may have been that Robert was the only person who was of that opinion, for the fact appears to be that nobody was found to gainsay him or to contest the title with him.

Whether Robert died or became unfit or incapable to play is uncertain, but at any rate he did not respond to the challenge of Thomas Pittman, who, on June 26, 1825, was to have played all comers at the Belvedere Gardens, Pentonville, for any sum between 5*l.* and 500*l.* The inclemency of the weather caused the postponement of the match, but seemingly Thomas found nobody to meet him when the weather grew fair. It is to be remembered that at this time the open court, without roof or side walls, was the recognised game, and that therefore all fixtures had to be made subject to the fairness of the weather. To the modern player it is curious to read in the conditions of a match, 'If a ball touch a tree and afterwards come into court it is a foul.' Against such contingencies the modern court conditions need not guard, but that side walls and roof, even of the best, are not an absolute protection against the weather many players can testify, for within the last few years the University contest has more than once been postponed owing to the deluge of rain, which the roof of the

match court at Prince's could not defy, and which flooded the floor, rendering play impossible.

But to resume. Apparently Thomas Pittman abdicated, and John, his brother, reigned in his stead; and he in 1834 put forth a challenge to all the world in general, and to one Lamb, with winged and somewhat offensive words, in particular, to meet him at the Belvedere Gardens to decide the rackets supremacy. But it was not until 1838 that Lamb was sufficiently roused to wait upon Pittman at the Belvedere Gardens. Excitement waxed high. Even the deposit of the stakes was made in the presence of a 'strong muster of lovers of this manly game.' Guineas to pounds were laid on Pittman. The combatants and spectators were all ready, when down came the rain and the match had to be postponed. On June 10 it came off. The match consisted of the first eight out of fifteen games. True there were only eleven aces in a game, but still it sounds a gigantic undertaking, especially played as it was in the height of summer. Lamb proved victorious by eight games to four, and the writer in 'Bell's Life' comments on the 'wonderful expertness' of Lamb and the 'remarkable strength' of Pittman, which criticisms do not give a very vivid picture of their respective styles. The old-fashioned game as played in the open court was, speaking without disrespect, a slow and a 'lobbing' game, and probably the modern racket player would have been surprised at the continence of hitting power exercised.

Lamb disappears and Mitchell takes his place. In 1846 he played a man called Young at Birmingham and Bristol. Apparently Young won one match and Mitchell the other, but that Mitchell was thereupon or thereafter dubbed champion there appears no reason to doubt.

In 1860 the open-court appears to be giving way to the close-court game, and Francis Erwood played Mitchell for 400*l.* at Woolwich and at Bristol, at which courts they were respectively markers. Erwood was victorious. The match at Bristol, which consisted of only five games, lasted an hour and

thirty-nine .....tes! An average of twenty minutes for each game is enormous, and we can hardly wonder at the players being at one time 'brought to an anchor,' as the reporter phrases it.

It was about this time that one of the best four-handed exhibition games ever played took place in one of the large close courts at Prince's, the four performers being Mitchell, Erwood, Mr. Hart-Dyke, and Mr. Prince, son of one of the founders of the club. Sir W. Hart-Dyke says that frequently during this game Erwood dropped—that is, 'slow' dropped—volleys from the back of the long court within an inch of the line.

The erection of these courts at Prince's in 1853 had undoubtedly done much to popularize the game, as is testified by the starting of the inter-university matches in 1858.[1]

Two years later Erwood, who then put out a challenge, had to lower his colours to Mr. (now Sir William) Hart-Dyke, a solitary instance in history, it is believed, of any amateur obtaining the championship from a professional in a game where the player relies on his individual skill.

Two matches were played, one at Woolwich, and the second at Prince's Club, Hans Place. In the Woolwich court (which has a slow floor and is longer than was the court at Prince's) Erwood secured the first game at four, and took a decided lead in the second, but the condition, youth, and activity of his opponent began to make themselves felt, and eventually Mr. Hart-Dyke won four games to his opponent's two. Erwood in this match made use of a high slow service, the accuracy of which at the beginning of the contest completely cramped Mr. Hart-Dyke's first stroke, and his slow dropping and placing of the ball would probably have defeated anybody less active and determined than Mr. Hart-Dyke. The latter's severe back-hand stroke into the back-hand corner, which he repeated time after time, whenever Erwood gave him an opening, took more

[1] The first inter-university match took place in 1855, but there was no single match. Since 1858 both double and single matches have been regularly played.

out of his opponent than the latter could afford to give. In the fifth and sixth games the hard work had told upon Erwood, while Mr. Hart-Dyke was comparatively fresh. At Prince's Club Erwood again won the first game, but it was the only game that he did win during the match, which was not so exciting nor productive of such good play as that at Woolwich.

Mr. Hart-Dyke was succeeded in the championship by Henry Gray, of Cambridge (eldest brother of the late champion, Joseph). He, however, never had to play for his laurels, as his challenge to meet anybody for 200*l.* found no response; he yielded the title to probably the finest player the world has ever seen, his next brother, William. The latter in 1855, at the age of twenty, had made his *début* in the racket-match world by beating Dalton, the marker at the Vice-regal Lodge court. Having defeated Foy of Aldershot, he won the largest stake ever deposited on such a venture. That 1,000*l.* should have been subscribed for the match between Gray and Foulkes shows the amount of interest that was taken in the game in the year 1867. Foulkes figured as the champion of America, and he took a lot of beating; indeed, from all accounts he must have been a fine player. Perhaps—quoting the American press—he 'nursed the ball for easy corner shots,' and so puzzled Bill, as Boakes, five-and-twenty years later, did Joe.

For the following graphic remarks with regard to William Gray's play the reader is indebted to Mr. Alfred Lyttelton, who as an Eton boy had many opportunities of watching him:—

'The family of Gray has enjoyed in the recent history of rackets an even greater pre-eminence than that taken by the Lambert family in the game of tennis. Amidst the remarkable quintett of brothers the ascendency of William Gray was incontestable. I used constantly to watch him, when in his prime, playing at Eton in 1868 and 1869; single-handed he would play and defeat the school representatives, Messrs. C. J. Ottaway and W. F. Tritton (no mean performers), giving them eight or ten aces in each game. About this time he was in the habit of giving eight to Mr. C. F. Buller, a very fine

slashing player, and probably the second best amateur of that day.

'In these matches he apparently was never seriously extended; certainly he never served his best, for his enjoyment of his marvellous powers in the other departments of the game was so great that he seemed anxious not to score without exhibiting them; and he would often play the ball to his opponent instead of placing it out of his reach, in order that he might drink to the dregs the intoxicating delight of a prolonged rally. He played rackets just as George Lambert plays tennis—like a gentleman and a sportsman. His object was no doubt, as that of all great players must be, to win. But he was not satisfied with victory unless it was achieved in faultless style. He was wont, for instance, to apologise if he hit the side wall before the front wall, undoubtedly on occasions a telling stroke from a strictly commercial point of view. But such a stroke did not satisfy Gray's instinctively high æsthetic standard of style.

'Gray was a slightly-built but very well-shaped man, with long arms. He hit the ball always when very near the ground; his stroke was never over-hand or round-hand, but always under-hand, the racket vertical, not horizontal. If the ball could be reached by volleying or half-volleying, he invariably adopted one of those ways of dealing with it. He was as certain to make his stroke off these as off the ordinary bounding ball, and this policy saved him trouble and gave no time to his opponent to get himself in readiness for receiving the next stroke. Though apparently not very strong, and obviously not a heavy man, Gray could hit a racket ball with amazing force. Even in his hard hitting there was an ease and grace delightful to watch, and when he was induced to play a "dropping" game he would seem almost to caress the ball, taking it very close to the ground and placing it just over the line with an exquisite under-hand curve. In games he would frequently use old rackets apparently as unfitted for active service as the seats of old cane-bottomed chairs. But in his hand these veterans seemed to renew their youth, and "drove" in a manner which

was both astonishing and mortifying to an opponent who, with an incomparably superior tool, produced most inferior results.

'When the greatest masters of various games are passed in review, none seem to have quite equalled Gray in the combination of absolute success with absolute gracefulness.

'If we think of Mr. W. G. Grace's batting we stand amazed at his enormous superiority to all competitors, when supremacy is measured, as it ought to be measured, by results in runs, the good hard standard coin and test of cricketing successfulness. But the methods by which Mr. Grace's runs are made, though sound, serviceable, powerful, and not without the dignity attaching to all very high efficiency, are not ornamental. There is a certain uncouthness and stiffness noticeable in the performance. Thus he who measures skilfulness by success will be abundantly satisfied, but he who, while giving full weight to supreme success, demands also consummate "form," will find something lacking even in the greatest cricketer the world has ever seen. The scorer will be filled with good things, but he whose heart is set upon beauty of style will be sent empty away. These observations apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to some others among the foremost players of games—conspicuously, for instance, to Pettitt, the champion tennis player.

'But if perfection in a game be attained by combining success in results with beauty of style—with the exception perhaps of Roberts, the great master of modern billiards, whose form, independently of its astonishing results, is that of an artist—no one to my mind has brought any game to such perfection as that to which William Gray raised the game of rackets.'

Thus far, and alas! no further, Mr. Lyttelton.

William Gray died in December 1875, and in the following month H. Fairs ('Punch') and Joseph Gray met to see who should fill the vacant championship. The first match was played at Prince's, and there 'Punch' beat his opponent by four games to one; the second at Rugby, where 'Punch' was also victorious by four games to two. The play in both matches was

described by eyewitnesses as somewhat disappointing, but very few men were found to say that the result was wrong.

The 1876 match presented great differences of style, Gray's self-contained neatness being in marked contrast to 'Punch's' slashing sweep. 'Punch' was a little man standing somewhere about 5 ft. 4 in., but the manner in which he reached the ball would lead one to suppose that he had the length of arm of a six-foot man. That arm too was extraordinarily loose. To see him hit gave rather the impression of a racket being slung at the end of a rope, so flexible were his joints. As he played it seemed as though H. Fairs was an arm and a racket, the rest of him being a mere appendage.

On 'Punch's' death in 1878 his opponent, Joseph Gray, became champion racket player, and there is very little doubt that until recently there was nobody who could successfully contest his supremacy. It is a matter of regret that he should not have had the opportunity of meeting a worthy opponent during those years in which he was in continuous practice, and until his game had probably been somewhat affected by the ever-increasing distance from 1878, and by the decreasing interest in a position which is prone to arise if its occupation does not appear to provoke opposition.

The year 1887 witnessed, amongst many other things, championship match between Joseph Gray and Peter Latham. The result of this game was possibly a surprise to many. The name of 'Gray' had great prestige attaching to it. Latham, Gray's opponent, was, speaking in a thoroughly comparative manner, unknown. His defeat of Walter Gray at Manchester in the previous year had demonstrated that Joseph Gray would have to look to his laurels, and the event proved Latham's great superiority in his own, and his but very trifling inferiority in his opponent's, court. There were many who thought that Walter Gray was very nearly as good a player as his brother Joseph; and when Peter Latham defeated the former by four games to two in the Manchester court, it became evident that Joseph would have to defend his championship. The great

ease with which Latham secured the victory in both matches in the Manchester court would seem to show that familiarity with that court would almost justify contempt of every opponent. Latham, without in any way disparaging his great abilities as a rally player, excels in that branch of the game in which intimate knowledge of a court is of supreme importance—to wit, service. In the Rugby match between him and Joseph Gray the nature of the court discounted the severity and difficulty of the service, the back wall always sending the ball out high and true, whereas at Manchester the back wall of the court tends to make the ball shoot down, and as a natural result gives the better server, which Latham undoubtedly is, his opportunity. In addition to being thus equipped, Latham is young, strong, first-rate with the back-hand stroke, and has a beautiful style.

The service statistics of the two matches were somewhat remarkable: whereas out of 166 aces scored at Rugby only 37 were made by service, out of the 81 made at Manchester 38 were scored by this means. The first, the Rugby match, was well worthy of the occasion. The rallies were magnificent, and Gray won the match by his placing of the ball; his opponent, who made much less use of the volley and the half-volley, being kept continually on the move. In the second match Gray was completely puzzled by the deadly nature of Latham's service; and anybody can appreciate the benumbing effect which a series of first-rate services has on the morale of the would-be taker, as well as the more obvious effect which it has on the actual score. That Gray, being in the opinion of many spectators out of form, was to a certain extent demoralised by the severity of the service, does not appear open to doubt, for in the course of this brief match he served his hand out on more than one occasion.

In 1888 Walter Gray tried, but failed, to avenge his brother's defeat. The games were played at the recently erected Queen's Club court and at the Charterhouse court. The match was a nearer thing than it would look on paper. Latham seemed

nervous at first, and Gray ran away in the first game of the first match, but subsequently Latham's service was undeniable. The Queen's Club match was certainly dull—unreturned service, ferocious attacks on the side walls, and an absence of volleys and half-volleys were its main features. It is true that Latham's service is invested with much grace and artistic merit, and that many of his services were impossible unless met before touching the side wall, but that is not sufficient to redeem a match from dulness. It was hoped by his supporters that Gray had the answer in the shape of the volley or half-volley, but he had not; and the combined skill of Bill Gray and 'Punch' might have been safely defied to take those services off the back wall. In the Charterhouse match Latham won the two games necessary in the first four games of the match. Latham throughout, though the younger man, played the older game.[1] Gray tore about the court, hit and served very hard, which told on a man of thirty-five who had, too, some weight to carry. The moral of the match was that you should be prepared to volley or half-volley the service if necessary.

Both these players were very unlike Joseph Gray, who might be described as a very neat rather than as a stylish player, very strong in the fore-hand, and quietly rather than boisterously active. He is, moreover, the neatest of volley players, with great command over the ball. Walter, on the other hand, is a terrific hitter, and his great strength enables him to continue hitting without tiring. His incessant activity is of the more boisterous order. His play used to be somewhat marred by a too frequent use of the side walls, but nobody ever made a faster game, or a better for the spectators to watch. George Gray of Haileybury, Grimason of Eton, Stevens ('Judy') of Harrow, Small of Wellington, Laker of the Queen's Club, and others there are—excellent players, but perhaps not quite in the same rank, from various causes, with Latham or Joseph

[1] Latham has recently made a successful *début* in the tennis court, but it is to be hoped that the position of champion racket player will be considered worth retaining.

and Walter Gray. The incursion of Boakes a year or two ago led those interested in the game to hope that there might be a revival of an international contest, but he contented himself with defeating 'Judy,' and returned over the water without having crossed rackets on this side of it with any player who could be fairly described as representative. Joseph had met Boakes at New York in 1882, and to the astonishment of most people Boakes won the first three games, when Gray began to bestir himself and bagged the next four straight off the reel, the seventh game being extremely close. The local press remarked that Boakes's method of 'nursing the ball for easy corner shots seemed rather new for Gray.' What class of stroke this expression indicates is not quite clear, but if it meant that Boakes played a gentle game, Joseph may well have been puzzled at first, seeing that he had been playing continually with his brother Walter. It will always be a matter of surprise to those who saw Boakes play over here that the match should have been so close. On the same occasion the two Grays played Boakes and Moore (whom many will recollect as 'Toby' at Prince's), conceding four aces, and the former won four games to two. The game must have been a lively one, for the ball, to quote a reporter of the match, 'was raised twenty-five or thirty times in the course of the bullies, and seemed to be in all parts of the court at once.' Walter's defeat of 'Toby' is likened to a cat playing with a mouse.

The court at New York in which these contests took place has the peculiarity of being coloured red. In the opinion of the writer such a colour is not so well adapted for the purpose to which a court is applied as the colour in ordinary use in England. The court has the further peculiarity of being placed on the second or third floor. It is very true, with rather a slow back wall. The principal marker there, Albert Wright, who came originally from the St. John's College courts at Cambridge, is undoubtedly a very fine player, with great command over the ball. A very curious racket incident happened while the writer was in New York in June 1887. A well-known player of

that city, if memory serves of the name of Miller, was playing in the court in West 26th Street. He struck at the ball in a bully with some vigour. The ball was arrested in its course by the racket, and wedged itself in between the gut, which it broke, and the wood of the racket. The writer forgot to ask what decision was given in this state of affairs.

THE MARKER. '12-0'

'Send down a "stone" to earn the marker's shilling for a love game'

## CHAPTER III

### AMATEURS

If the chronicler of the doings of non-professional players had taken his task in hand a year or two ago, he would have been met by an almost entire dearth of facts on which to arrive at a conclusion as to which were the best of these performers. There can hardly have been a spectator at a racket match who, when he admired the play of X, has not heard somebody say, 'Ah, but you should have seen Y!' (whose fame would be of five, ten, fifteen, or any number of years' standing according to the age of the speaker). Facts there are, of course, in plenty, but facts deciding the relative merits of performers none, if we except the unique victory of Sir William Hart-Dyke.

Within the last few years, however, the Queen's Club has instituted an amateur championship, which has been productive of some excellent play, and has tended to galvanise the game into greater animation.

It is perhaps worth notice how these recent matches have confirmed the view that rackets is a game for the young. Mr. C. D. Buxton beat Major Spens; Mr. E. M. Butler beat Mr. Buxton;[1] Peter defeated both Joseph and Walter Gray. The chronicler would much have liked to record the

[1] The 1890 competition has added another instance, Mr. P. Ashworth, of Harrow and Cambridge, having defeated Major Spens and Captain Hedley. It is, too, to be observed that Harrow and Cambridge have contributed all the three champions.

contests in such matches of amateurs of a bygone day, but unless they chanced to meet on some such occasion as the inter-university match, his view can merely be a matter of opinion.

One of the first recollections of the present writer in connection with first-class play is the series of games which used to take place between Mr. R. D. Walker and the redoubtable 'Punch.'

It is impossible to conceive a greater dissimilarity between two players. Mr. Walker never really seemed to be moving either himself or his racket; very rarely, indeed, did he open his shoulders at the ball, which he always placed at the farthest possible point from his opponent. One great principle of the game, too, he had thoroughly grasped—to wit, that there was and is a great deal more space between the top of the line and the roof than between the top of the line and the floor. This is a self-evident fact which many players never appreciate. With three aces conceded, Mr. Walker would render a good account of himself against this opponent, who was kept in a state of incessant motion throughout the game. His style has had few, if any, imitators, and probably not many people have or could ever acquire the nerve and judgment possessed by Mr. Walker.

But few young players (and, indeed, now there are not many who could by any hyperbole be dubbed old) have the requisite assurance to make slow drops in a game which they are really desirous of winning. It is disagreeable to have to face the extremely foolish appearance which a person presents after failure in the stroke, and the more or less audible comments, '*What* a stroke!' 'Chucking the game clean away!' 'Of course, if he's going to do *that*——' and the like.

Another of the impassive amateur players was the late Mr. C. J. Ottaway, who excelled in this game as he did in all others. It is believed he is the only player who never lost a match either for his school or his university. It was not until you got into the court with him that you found out how good he was.

Apparently without wrist, he would take a ball after it had passed him with ease, though, it must be confessed, without much grace. Wherever you hit the ball, he was there. There was little flash or showiness about his style, but a thorough effectiveness.

Lest the reader should suppose that in the amateur racket world effectiveness is ever accompanied by a continent style, Mr. C. F. Buller may be cited as an instance to the contrary. In his case most of the force seemed to come from the wrist, and the pace imparted to the ball was terrific. With these wrist players like Mr. Buller and Mr. T. S. Dury it is hard to conceive at what pace the ball would go if the whole arm and weight were put into the stroke. The exhibitions of play between Mr. Buller and William Gray in the Eton racket court used to delight those who were fortunate enough to be present.

Probably there have been few more graceful players than Mr. Cecil Clay, and, taking the run of Oxonians, Mr. R. O. Milne added an astute vigilance to an ubiquitous neatness. It was he who won the champion cup presented by the Manchester Club; but, without disparagement to his play, it may be said that the contest hardly attracted the attention which it deserved. In fact, so little interest had been manifested of late, that the Manchester Club, in the year 1886, had no incentive to open the competition.

His best friends would hardly describe Mr. A. J. Webbe's ubiquity as neat, but ubiquity there was, and is still, though the tennis and not the racket court is the arena, combined with an unswerving determination, a disagreeable service, and a constant mesne elevation of the ball in the bully. Mr. Webbe is another of those players whom the gallery is apt to underrate. He and his partner never won the double match in the University contests, but he was successful in both the single matches in which he took part, in circumstances which showed that he was never daunted by adversity.

Without naming many others of days long past in this con-

nection, nobody can deny that it would have been a great treat to the racket world if a recognised competition had existed in the days when these players were at their prime. Major Spens, who has since been defeated by both Messrs. Buxton and Butler, was for many years probably the best amateur. Mr. A. G. Steel should not be passed over; for, without doubt, a year or two ago against any player he would have rendered a good account of himself.

Mr. Steel, by the way, is a notable instance of the rapidity with which a game can be swallowed and digested by a person of exceptional athletic maw. When he went up to Cambridge he had hardly tasted the game, and within two years he was a thoroughly appreciative recipient of all the good things which could be served by Messrs. Bligh, Ponsonby, Cobbold, Studd, and the other players of skill and experience then resident at Cambridge.

On the whole, the University matches have not produced such close contests as the public school matches. For some years in the last decade Cambridge failed to win a game. Then the tide began to set the other way, and Cambridge has been of late consistently successful.

As has been said before, these matches began to be regularly played in 1858; and from that time to this the week succeeding the Boat Race has been the time set apart for their decision. When it is remembered that at the beginning Oxford had the redoubtable Mr. Hart-Dyke for one of her champions, it is no surprise to find that that University was victorious.

After Mr. Hart-Dyke's departure from Oxford the Cambridge representatives began to render a better account of themselves in the racket world. Mr. Ainslie, after being beaten once by Mr. R. D. Walker, defeated him two years in succession, and Mr. Daniel also defeated Mr. Walker on the fourth occasion on which the latter appeared. Messrs. Ainslie and Daniel are said to have been two of the best players who ever appeared in these matches. Cambridge, indeed, was victorious in the single match without intermission from 1862 to 1868,

though the double produced varying results; but from 1868, when Mr. Warner and Mr. Stow defeated Mr. Clay and Mr. Kennaway, they had no victory either in single or double match until 1876, when the double fell to them after a very hard tussle. Since that date, though the single match has several times gone against her representative, Cambridge has never failed in the double-handed game.

Stow and Money are names which one would expect to find doing doughty deeds with a bat, even a racket bat; but Mr. Clay was able to dispose of them without the loss of a single game. Nor was Mr. Yardley more successful against Mr. Ottaway. The beautiful strokes and rather wild play of Mr. Sanders could not prevail against the stone-wall game of Mr. Ottaway or the vigilance of Mr. Milne, and it was not until 1879 that Cambridge, in the person of Mr. Bligh, succeeded in putting the single match to her credit. He was probably as good a player as has appeared for his university, with an enormous reach, an unerring eye, and a fremendous swing. It was a question whether he or Mr. A. G. Steel was the hardest hitter who has appeared in these matches of late years.

It was an accident in the shape of a broken limb that first drove Mr. Alfred Lyttelton to the racket court at Eton. Rackets would not at the first blush appear to be a game suitable for a man with a fractured limb, but that limb, in his case, was the left[1] arm, which prevented his taking part in other games. Brilliancy and eagerness rather than safety were the attributes of his play, and the writer cannot help recalling how, in the double match against Oxford in 1876, with the score three games all, 9—11, Oxford wins, Mr. Lyttelton darted backwards and forwards from service box to service box, and snatched six hasty aces from the astonished Oxonians.

Since 1879 Cambridge has had a plethora of good players—indeed, at one time there were available in the inter-Uni-

[1] It is probably unnecessary to say, except to persons who have seen Mr. Lyttelton play billiards only, that he is a right-handed player at all games, except, if my memory serves me, billiards.

versity match four successful competitors for the champion cup.

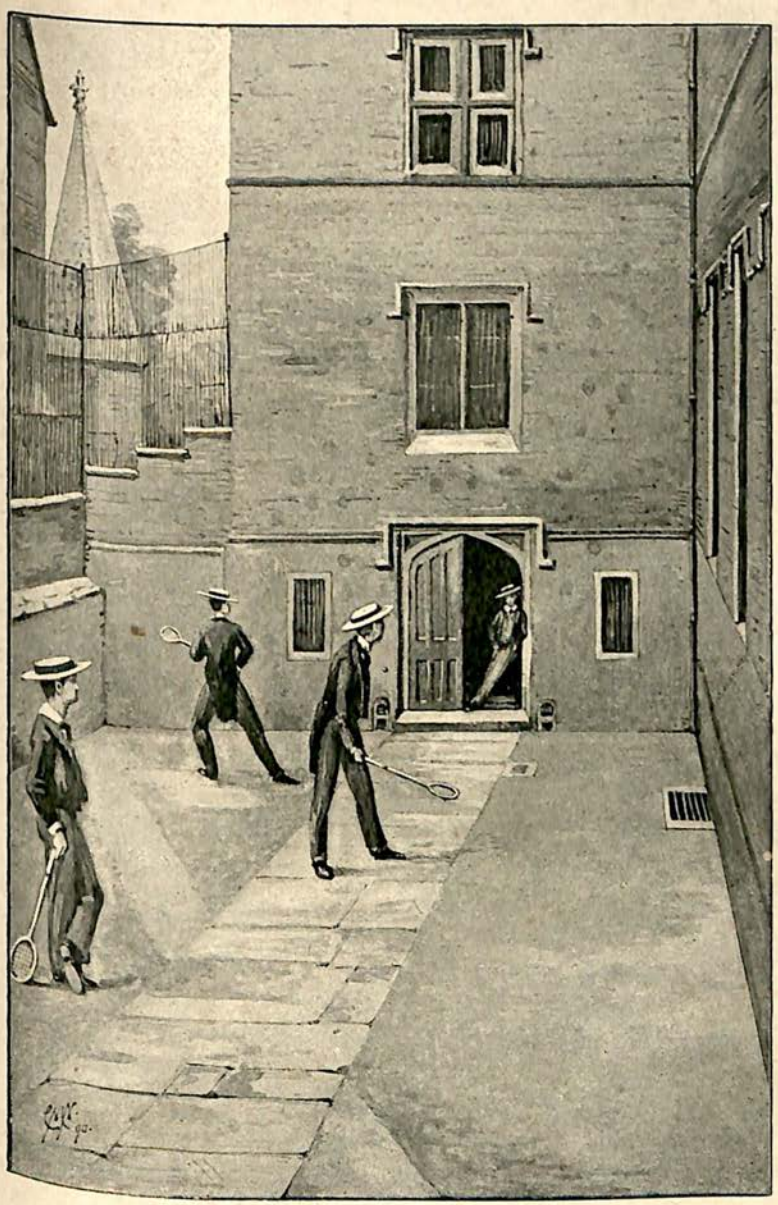
It was about this time that Mr. Studd and Mr. Leslie fought two hard tussles for their respective Universities, honours being divided. On the second occasion Mr. Studd had left to Mr. Cobbold and Mr. Lucas to do battle in the double match, reserving himself for the single: a solitary instance through the matches of such self-abnegation. Nobody ever played the game more neatly or effectively than Mr. Cobbold, though there was a deficiency in some of those attributes which conduced to the efficiency of Mr. Bligh. Mr. Leaf and Mr. H. E. Crawley, of Cambridge, each beat Mr. Buckland, of Oxford. The latter made beautiful strokes, but his snare was the easy ball. Mr. Crawley is probably as diabolical an amateur server as has been seen, but his play was apt to be a trifle wild in the bully. His defeat in the inter-University single match of 1887 by that excellent steady player, Mr. Noble, showed that at Oxford rackets is by no means on the wane. In 1888 Mr. Phillipson defeated Mr. Buxton (the amateur champion), but it is only fair to the latter to say that he was not at the time in good practice. Mr. Phillipson did not enter for the championship.

Rackets was always a popular game with the army, as the courts in England, Ireland, and India, and the matches between the Engineers and the Artillery, and Woolwich and Sandhurst, will testify. It has been suggested that the army had for some time the best amateur player in the person of Major J. Spens, who combines craft with ferocious hitting and a pretty style. Tower, Cooper-Key, King, Hedley, and Friend are names which at once occur to one in connection with the game, the former being one of the few modern racket players who, while playing both with force and judgment, successfully attempts the dropping tactics. In connection with the service Mr. W. E. Denison must not be forgotten. A racket match would be lacking in an essential without his genial presence and judicial sagacity.

The public school matches began in the year 1868. Mr.

Ottaway in 1868 and 1869 was an Eton boy. It is hardly necessary to add that Eton was the successful school. 1870 is noteworthy as being the only year in which, at the old Prince's court, any school other than Eton and Harrow has won, Rugby having been victorious. The next year witnessed Harrow's first victory, and no match could possibly have been closer, three games all, 12—5, Eton wins; 14—12, Eton wins; and game ball all in the seventh game.

Harrow has been consistently fortunate in these contests. The cup was presented on the terms that, if the same school won three years in succession, it should be entitled to keep it. Three cups under these conditions have become the property of Harrow, and as long as 'squash' exists there is little doubt that this school will contribute more racket players than any other to the general stock. Three sets of brothers have mainly brought about this result for their school: Hadow (A. A., P. F., and E. M.), Kemp (C. W. M., M. C., and A. F.), and Crawley (H. E. and E.). These players are partially or wholly responsible for ten out of twelve victories. It should, also, not pass unnoticed that the three players who have won the amateur championship are Harrovians. Certainly no excessive share of good luck has fallen to the lot of Eton. On two occasions has she needed but one more victorious year to entitle her to the possession of the cup. Both in 1870 and 1879 only a very little more was wanted to get her home. It is true that in 1879 Harrow won, and Rugby played Harrow in the final. But the general opinion was that in that year there was but little to choose between Rugby and Eton. They were drawn together for the penultimate match, Harrow being a bye. They played, and extremely well, a very hard match which Rugby just won; and when the Rugbeians came into the court next day they were all abroad, and, to the surprise of many, fell easy victims to Harrow. The Harrovians, assuredly with not one of their strongest pairs, never lost a game this year throughout these matches, though there were many who thought that they owed their victory in the final to the chance which had brought Eton



SQUASH RACKETS AT HARROW

and Rugby together on the previous day. Certainly, setting aside those who subsequently represented their universities, Eton has produced some brilliant players. The three P.'s, Ponsonby, Pemberton, and Phillipson, will occur to anybody who has recently taken an interest in these contests as players of a high order of merit. The latter, though never successful in the final contest, was probably as good a boy player as has often been seen, and racket players must deplore his enforced absence from the court during a great part of his university career. The writer, too, cannot help having a most disagreeable recollection of Oswald's service.

Since Gardner and Pearson won the cup for Rugby in 1870 this school has only twice (1873 and 1879) been in the final. In the former year Rugby suffered a love defeat. The latter occasion has just been referred to, and it must be added that since the days of Leslie and Stutfield Rugby has not been much to the fore in the racket court.

Marlborough has been well up once or twice, and two or three years back had a pair well worth a final victory; but neither the Marlburians nor the representatives of any other school were ever successful at the old court at Prince's. Cheltenham and Haileybury have secured places in the final contest. Cheltenham, be it remembered, was almost literally within an ace of achieving a victory over the redoubtable Ottaway on the first occasion of these contests, while in 1886 the Haileyburians pressed Harrow very hard.

Charterhouse and Winchester must be heartily congratulated on breaking through the spell which seemed to assure the victory to Eton or Harrow when these matches were in 1888 moved to the Queen's Club. Harrow was successful at Lord's in 1887, the one year which intervened between the contests at Prince's and the Queen's.

Anybody who takes the trouble to scan the scores of these public school matches will be astounded at the number of extraordinarily close contests, and it is much to be hoped that they will be similarly remarkable in the future; for, quite apart

from the closeness of the game, it may be that valuable lessons are learnt of nerve, endurance, and stout-heartedness under difficulties.

This brings that part, which by the most profound courtesy may be termed historical, to a close. The game will probably endure and flourish at schools, where the attractions of tennis do not penetrate, and the delights of lawn tennis are illicit. But probably the former racket player indulging in a retrospect will never regret that he turned his attention, his limbs, and his mind to this 'manly pastime,' as the journalist of yore dubbed the game of rackets.

## CHAPTER IV

### PRACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS

WITH this slight sketch of the facts and incidents in the career of the game of rackets, it is now proposed to offer some observations by way of advice to those who deem themselves to be in a position for its reception.

### THE GAME OF RACKETS

In the first place, a brief description of the game of rackets must be given.

As has been said, four walls and a roof, though in one sense the roof is not material, constitute the court. The front wall has two lines on it; the higher is called the service-line, because a service, to be good, has to strike the wall above it (this line, however, being immaterial except for service), and the lower, formed by a board fixed across the front-wall, is called the play-line, above which line all returns to be good must be struck. As one is endeavouring to resolve the game into its primary elements, it should be added that the return must be made above this board; indeed, a principle of the game is that all strokes on a line count against the striker.

A and B are opponents. A, having won the toss, prefers to serve; for as in fives, only the hand-in can score. He takes his stand, with part of his foot, or as much more of himself as he pleases, within either of the 'serving boxes,' which are the smaller squares marked out half-way up the floor of the court. He must then strike the ball:

1. Above the service-line.
2. Without hitting any other wall before striking the front-wall.
3. Into the hindmost quarter of the court opposite to that side on which he stands.

He may serve from either side he pleases at the start of his innings, but if successful in securing an ace, he crosses over to the other side.

If his opponent misses the serve or any subsequent stroke in the 'bully,' the server scores one. If the server serve two venial faults, i.e. under the service-line, or outside the hind quarter of the court into which he is serving; or one unpardonable fault, i.e. under the play-line or against some other wall before the front-wall, or if he miss a stroke in the bully, his opponent takes up the service.

Whoever scores fifteen wins. If the players are thirteen points each, the one who attains that score first can play a further short game of three or five to decide the game; if fourteen points each, the game can only be further extended by three points; this is called 'setting the game,' and applies equally to double games.

In a double game the players who win the toss have the right to the service of one player only on the first innings of the game, but after that the other player succeeds his partner in the service, the rule being that the scoring, or 'in,' side must not serve more than once in succession into the same court.

An out-player may agree with his partner that he shall cross over and take his court, but this having been done, players must not return to their original courts until the close of the game.

It should, perhaps, be said that the above remarks are not supposed to be exhaustive, but it is hoped that they may enable a person who is entirely ignorant of the game to go into a court and understand what is being done and how the score is made.

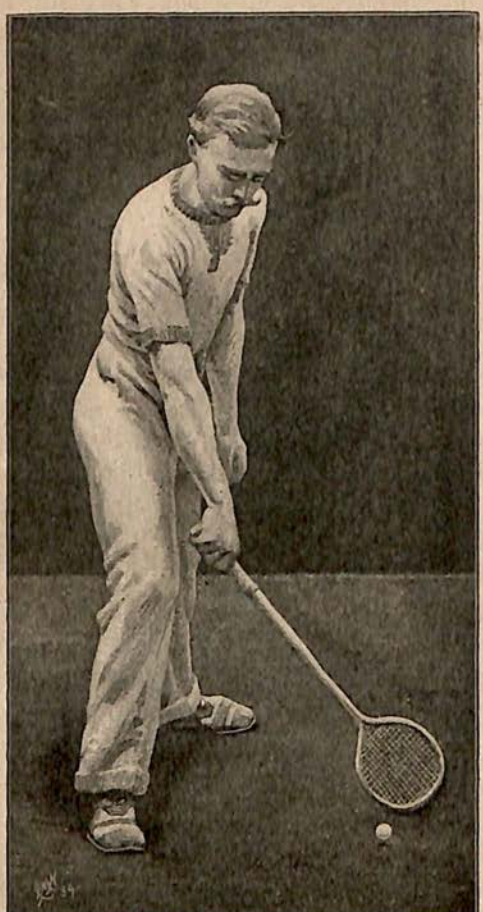
## THE CHOICE OF A RACKET

With regard to the choice of a racket, the beginner would do well to choose one in which the weight is in the handle. Such an effect up to a certain point can always be obtained by multiplying the folds of the leather which forms the handle. By this means the player will obtain more control over the racket, and its face is more likely to be where it should be, and where the player intends that it should be, than if one is used whose weight is in the head. The question of the weight of a racket, apart from the distribution of that weight, is a matter which each player must consider for himself. The writer would not advise a beginner to use a very light racket, as being more liable to be broken, nor a very heavy one, as being likely to aggravate the tendency towards tardiness of stroke which is common among beginners, and indeed others.

The average weight of a racket is about 9 oz.; 10 oz. is top weight, and they have, to suit the idiosyncrasy of players, been made as light as 7 oz. It is perhaps worth remembering that if a player affects a racket of an out-of-the-way build or weight, he may often have a difficulty in suiting himself. It is well therefore, if possible, to accustom oneself to the use of a racket of average calibre.

But as soon as a player has made any progress, no rules made by others as to selection of a racket can be of much value. A player of experience after seeing a person play might be able to make a useful suggestion, but no absolute guide can be given. The writer, however, is of opinion that it is no disadvantage for a physically weak person to use a moderately heavy racket, especially if he plays what may be described as a blocking game—i.e. where a player makes a constant use of the half-volley return, merely placing his racket on the floor without going through with his stroke. Generally, it might be said, if a physically weak player perpetually hits with his full force, he should have a light racket, or he will tire; but it should be remembered that the heavy racket will give him the

sense of driving the ball equally hard with much less exertion. With regard to the durability of a racket, let the player choose one that is strong in the shoulder. Many hoops are very thin



TAKING THE SERVE: THE BLOCKING 'HALF-VOLLEY'

at that place, and this, combined with the weakening of the part by the screw which holds together the hoop, renders a breakage almost certain if the ball should strike there with any

force. That a racket should be tightly strung it is unnecessary to say, but a beginner will learn equally well with one that is loosely strung, and will thus probably save a considerable outlay in mending and replacing. As at starting you are very likely to break rackets, it may be well to remember the master's speech to his coachman who told him he could not stop the horses: 'Drive into something cheap!'

## HOLDING THE RACKET

Having selected your racket, the next point is how to hold it. The first object to be gained is, the presentation to the ball of its full face, and it must be so held that no change should be necessary whether the ball come to the fore or the back hand. Take the racket up, grasping the handle with the four fingers, so that its face and the palm of your hand are parallel; then let the thumb stretch over the handle, touching the side of, but not overlapping, the fore-finger. The practised player does not as a rule hold the racket very tightly, but it is well for a beginner to do so, and also to grasp it very slightly short of its full length, relaxing and lengthening the grip as he finds he obtains command over it. Many good players hold it in the bully so that its end is within the palm, thereby obtaining the longest possible swing, but shorten it for the purpose of service. The beginner will be apt to hold the weapon with bent elbow, as though he were digging with one hand, finding it in this manner easier to return the ball. Such attempts are not likely to contribute much towards making a successful or graceful player. It is better to have hit properly and have missed than never to have hit at all, for hitting such poking and spooning cannot be called.

With regard to back-hand strokes, the beginner will find it useful to place his thumb along the back of the handle; some players of experience do this, but it is apt to mar the grace of the back-hand stroke by occasioning a square-elbowed style of play. It undoubtedly has, however, a steadying effect, and the

player is more likely to give the full face to the ball, which the beginner will find more difficult to do in the back-hand than in the fore-hand.

Remember that in this game in the bully the ball should as a rule be met with the full face of the racket, but little, except perhaps in the case of a slow drop, or in killing an easy ball, is gained by cutting or twisting the ball.

## STYLE

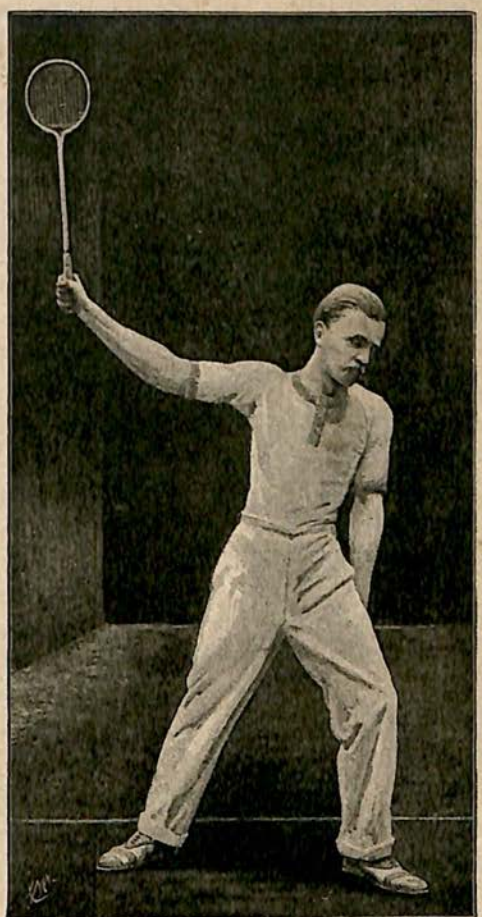
In this game the more joints a player has in his arms (for some players seem to have none) and the more he makes use of them the better, both for style and effectiveness. The wrist is the most important, especially in the back-hand. A stiff-armed player may be fairly good in the fore, but will never be first-rate in the back-hand. At the same time the writer's advice would be to learn to hit the ball at the full length of the arm with fair accuracy before turning much attention to the joints. Beginners are apt to get too near the ball, which is fatal to making a sharp stroke ; let the ball be at full-length distance from the player. Avoid jerking in your stroke, or you will probably be beaten by a ball which comes faster or slower than you expected, a thing which will not infrequently happen ; and hit, assuming you are hitting the ball on the first bound, either before it has risen to its full height (the half-volley) or after it has dropped from that full height, and you will be likely to make a better stroke than if you are cramped by taking the ball high in the air ; for the stroke is less likely to suffer from the upward tendency of the swing.

Poise the weight on the forward leg as if you were playing forward, as a right-hand batsman in the fore-hand and as a left-hand batsman in the back.

There is one other thing to be remembered : whenever your opponent is nearer the back-wall than you are, put the face of your racket between your head and him. It may save your life.

## SERVICE

Service next claims our attention, and its effectiveness will depend to a very large extent on the court and the ball, as well



THE 'FORE-HAND' STROKE

as the player. In a slow court few services will be difficult, while in all courts it is much easier to give a difficult service with a very hard ball.

The unlearned in such matters might imagine that all racket balls are equally hard; they may be so for the purpose of sensation, but for the purpose of service there is a very material difference.

The writer has a vivid recollection of the vast amount of balls consumed in the universities and public schools matches, such consumption being due to the fact that those balls which the server rejected as being too soft, the out-player rejected as being too hard.

Service is a branch of the game which is irksome to many players, and in consequence they never take sufficient pains. The writer ventures to think that a majority of matches amongst amateurs is won by service. In a single game especially to be an adept server saves the legs and wind of the player enormously, and in any game the advantage conferred is great. It is further a part of the game which can be and has been effectively performed by those who had not much pretension to all-round play.

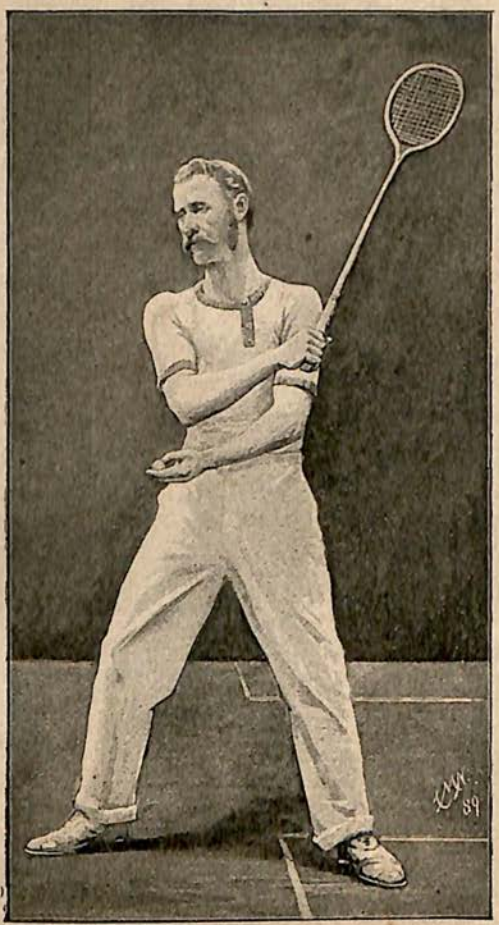
The objects to be attained by the server are that the service should be of good length and directed into the corner of the court. For the length to be good the ball should pitch in such a place that it hits the back-wall on the first bound, with but little of that bound left in it. This can only be attained by practice, and indeed will involve fresh practice in every strange court to which the player comes, even if he be familiar with a court of identical size. It is found by experience that a direction into the corner of the court is, as a rule, best obtained by aiming just above the service-line, about a foot nearer the side-wall nearest to which you are serving, when the server is serving fore-handed from the fore-hand court, or if he serves back-handed into the fore-hand court. If a player serves fore-hand into the fore-hand court, to direct the ball into the corner he will of course have to aim rather nearer to the right-hand wall. It is unnecessary to dilate further on this matter, it being remembered that the angle of refraction is equal to the angle of incidence.

Though 'length' may effect the object of a very slight rebound from the back wall, that object is very materially assisted by spin given to the ball by the motion of the racket. Such

FORE-HAND SERVICE INTO THE BACK-HAND COURT

spin is usually imparted—the wood of the racket sometimes imparts it in a diabolical manner—by what may be termed a 'chop' or a 'slice,' in each case the racket not meeting

with the full face, but being drawn sharply across the ball. Where good length, speed, and spin are combined, the result is a difficult service.



BACK-HAND SERVICE INTO THE FORE-HAND COURT

The following classification of styles of service is not by any means exhaustive, but most players will be found pursuing one or another of such styles with more or less modification :—

1. Where the player draws himself up to his full height

and hits down on the ball with the full face of the racket. This service will not be found of much use in any but a fast court.

2. Where the player hits the ball from above with the sloped face of the racket.

3. Where the racket is raised hatchet-wise and brought sharply across the ball, thereby imparting a good deal of spin.

4. Where the ball is met by the sloped face of the racket underneath, either with a jerk or with a long sweeping motion.

If the over-hand service be used, the player will do well to stand as near the front-wall as the rules will allow ; by so doing the ball will not be so apt to rise from the front-wall. This position is, however, somewhat of a disadvantage in a single game, as it leaves the server so much ground to cover before he can get back for his adversary's return. It may too be observed of No. 1 that it is not as a rule effective unless applied with great force, and it will always be for the player to consider whether he can afford that expenditure.

With regard to Nos. 2, 3, and 4, the player who avails himself of these methods usually stands to serve at a greater distance from the front-wall, as the spin is required to do what the length alone can effect for No. 1.

It will be found useful to cultivate a back-hand service into the fore-hand court. The out-player sees less of the ball before it comes to him, a greater sweep is obtained, and the beginner will find useful the practice in back-hand play which it affords.

One remark in concluding this branch of the game which applies equally to the other branches: if once the objects to be attained are grasped, an ounce of practice is worth a pound of watching of good players, and a ton of volumes of instruction.

## THE 'SERVEE'

The position of the servee must depend to a large extent on the temperament and idiosyncrasies of the server, but as a general rule he takes his stand about a yard from the back-wall, and about the same distance from the dividing line within the court into which the service is being directed.

Many players stand at a point which enables them to take the service on the volley or the half-volley, intercepting the ball between the front-wall and the corner of the court. By this method the good-length services are the easier to take, but the server of resource will note the position of the servee and act accordingly. It is believed that in a fast court, while the service is apt to come sharply from the back-wall, many more services are returned by the servee, who thus intercepts the ball; on the other hand, it is a more exhausting game to play, as the ball has to be met at its full velocity. It is well for the player to be provided with the faculty of interception in reserve to meet the case of an opponent whose deadly services are habitual, and the practice thereby obtained in volleying and half-volleying, which are the life and soul of the ordinary bully, will be invaluable. This method in the back-hand will make frequent demands on a stroke which for lack of a better name the writer dubs the 'wrist-flick,' where the player finds himself nearer the ball than he expected, and is forced to make a dart at the ball without much certainty as to its position.

Most important of all, however, for the first return is it that it should not touch the side-wall on its way to the front. The ideal first return should hit the front-wall within a yard from the side-wall, so that it clings to that side-wall on its return journey, and finds a terminus in the corner of the court. This return, if made fairly low and hard, will present the greatest difficulty in a four, and will usually be deadly in a single game. If the side-wall is hit before the front, the ball will come into the middle of the court, and, however struck, will present *comparatively* little difficulty.

Another effective return is when the servee returns the ball straight and hard on the outside of the server. Not so many opportunities occur of delivering this stroke, unless the servee

THE 'WRIST-FLICK'

is prepared to sacrifice the safety of the server, who after serving usually runs towards the middle of the court, thereby partially blocking the course of the ball in this direction.

## THE BULLY

In a four game the great secret of successful partnership is to 'call.' This, it is perhaps superfluous to add, means *audibly* claiming the return for yourself or assigning it to your partner. No matter how outrageous the robbery may appear on your partner's part, if he call resign the stroke to him without a murmur, or at all events defer the murmur until the conclusion of the bully. Do not imitate in this respect the conduct of a very well-known player, who, when his partner ran about the court taking every ball, threw his racket into the corner, exclaiming, 'I didn't come into the court to look on.'

As a rule the server plays 'up'—i.e. near the front-wall—for his side, and the servee plays back for his. Any ball that hits the back-wall on the volley belongs usually to the up-player. It will often be found that of two partners one is the better up- or back-player; if they act harmoniously, it will often be easy for each in the course of the bully to assume that part of the responsibility which suits him best. As in other things, so in rackets; some partnerships never seem to work smoothly. Two well-known players were constantly partners, and differed as to their respective rights. At last D said, 'Never mind, this is the last time we shall ever play together.' W: 'I hope to heaven it is!' And yet the next day and many subsequent days found them comrades, and, it must be said, most formidable opponents.

Remember always to guard your head with the face of the racket. This has been said before, but it cannot be too often repeated.

The same remarks which were made with regard to the first return and the neglect of the side-wall will apply, though in a less degree, to returns during the bully; but it is certainly often the case that a judicious use of the side-wall will enable a player to place the ball away from his opponent, which can very rarely be so effected in returning the service.

As a general rule, try to make rather a safe than a brilliant stroke. Remember there is a great deal more space between

the top of the line and that of the court than between the top of the line and the floor.

After you have returned the ball, try to judge where it is likely that it will be returned by your opponent. Experience

'MINE! CONFOUND YOU!'

of the game and of the style of that opponent can alone give this knowledge, and it must be confessed that any judgment founded on it is liable to be upset by an astute tactician.

If you are strong in wind and limb, seldom give up a stroke as hopeless; you will often surprise yourself and others by returning a ball which looked so; besides, the fact of not attempting not only loses an ace, which loss might possibly be averted, but it has a bad moral effect upon yourself, and induces a corresponding elation on the part of your opponent.

The spectator of a game of rackets will now see but few slow drops made in the course of a match. The style usually affected is a hard-hitting one; and the volley and half-volley form the staple of the play, and this probably affords the greatest enjoyment both to spectator and performer. As a rule volleying should not be used to a ball that comes above the level of the shoulder. Such hits usually soar to the roof.

## MATCH-PLAYING

Training, technically so called, may be cursorily dismissed. It may be assumed that nobody would play the worse for it, and would perchance feel less discomfort towards the end of the third game in a single match. A wind-giving regimen is the same whatever may be the object of it, whether a race or any other kind of sport; but more amateur matches are played by those who do not relinquish their ordinary habits of life for the purpose.

In connection with the subject of dress there is only one observation of any importance to be made: avoid playing in those shoes which have merely a flimsy canvas 'upper.' A serious strain is no uncommon result. Have, too, a thick sole; you will be less likely to get footsore.

With regard to practice, do not play so much as to lose your keenness about the game. Allow, therefore, such an interval to elapse previous to a match as will encourage that keenness. This may vary in time from a few hours to a few days. Each must be his own judge, subject to advice on such a matter, and to the amount of physical strength which he possesses.

Two or three hard games a week will usually be found sufficient to put an amateur in his best form. Let the games be hard games, and do not continue when the play begins to slacken. It will not be disputed that many amateurs have failed to show their best form in matches from over-play and consequent staleness. This especially applies to the players who represent the public schools.

To entitle you to take your place in a four-handed match for your school or university, you will probably have had to defeat a certain number of players in a single, but it may be said that it does not at all follow that you will make the most efficient partner. To devise any other method of choice would not be easy, in spite of the mania for popular election, which, indeed, was in one case adopted at Harrow; therefore the single match first claims attention.

Remember that your opponent may have a mind as well as a body. With many amateurs a collapse of the latter follows a blow to the former. Is that mind likely to be depressed by your getting a start? Try to get a start. Is it likely to be elated by your relaxing your efforts? Don't relax your efforts. Over-confidence after obtaining a lead has lost many matches, and should be eschewed. A *match* is hardly ever hopelessly gone. If a *game* seems hopelessly gone, *and* you have doubts about your staying powers, let it go, but only after very serious consideration. If you have no doubt about your strength, fight every ace, even at 13—0. Remember that your opponent probably plays better the more easily he is winning. *Most* opponents do.

If you are much less strong than your opponent and of superior skill, do your best to win the match off the reel. You will find it less exhausting to play a small number of games at full speed than a large number at half-speed winding up with one at full speed; for if the match depends on one game, you will probably deem it your duty to extend yourself to the extreme limit. If you are a better player, but less active, than your opponent, you will probably find it best to endeavour to

kill the ball; do not try to hit within an inch of the line. Six inches or a foot is usually quite as good for practical purposes, and you will escape seeing your smartest stroke fail for lack of a fraction of an inch elevation. In all games, but especially single games, placing is of more importance than strokes.

You will probably find at the end of a match more reserve force in the arm than elsewhere; therefore, if you depend on arm force, do not spare the arm and spoil your game. Remember, too, to serve first into that court in which your opponent is weaker.

It is very easy to say, Do not get flurried; but it is not difficult to take plenty of time.

Decline, however, to stoop to such wind-giving tricks as tying the already tied shoe latchet, walking slowly to the end of the court to get a ball, and the like. They are unworthy of the proper game spirit in a contest which should and must largely depend on lasting power.

In a double match it is a truism to say that you have a partner. It is, however, a fact that is repeatedly ignored. He is not likely to be old—for rackets is not as a rule played by the mature adult—but he may be feeble. If so, and indeed if not so, the first essential is to 'call' at every stroke about which it may be doubtful whether it belongs to you or him. Two players who constantly play together and have always 'called' will find this matter arrange itself.

You may, too, so arrange matters that he who is the better player near the front wall should have the majority of those strokes. Remember also that you have to study the idiosyncrasies of four people including yourself, and having made up your mind as to the which is the better of your opponents, if you are first hand in, serve and hit to the other.

If you are the head man, encourage your partner; however badly he may be playing, always applaud him when he deserves it, and sometimes when he does not. If you look glum and tell him to 'try and do a little better,' it will probably be quite fatal to your receiving any further modicum of assistance.

If you are a better player than your partner, take as many balls as are doubtfully his, and call as soon and as aggressively as possible ; but if you do not take care your partner will begin with shame to take the corner, and when you summon him to give his aid he will be so surprised that it is 20 to 1 against his taking the ball. If he upsets these odds, you are probably taking too much upon yourself.

If you are the worse player, defer to your leader. At the same time do not be afraid to claim *audibly* a stroke clearly yours. The part of second fiddle here is not an easy one. You must always be prepared both to take or to leave to your partner every ball in the bully which should be taken by you. If your partner scowls without just cause, submit ; never mind your defence ; you are more likely to help in winning the match —which, be it remembered, is presumably your object—by pleading guilty.

Don't be fastidious about the balls which are sent you with which to serve. Stones and puddings should be rejected, and no player of any experience will have any difficulty in deciding what balls come within that category.

Do not be absurdly modest about claiming a 'let' ball. Remember it is only a claim, and will, if ill founded, be disallowed by the umpires. At the same time do not play a match in the petty spirit of a huckstering attorney, but in all matters take the chivalrous line ; so shall you obtain the greater satisfaction, and the like treatment at the hands of your opponent.

Before dismissing the subject of match-playing, there are one or two matters connected with the rules of the game which deserve notice.

The custom has been of late for the players to settle before a match in consultation with the umpires on what points there shall be an appeal from the marker to the umpires, and the usual result of such discussion has been that the marker's decision is final in the case of a service, but open to appeal on all other matters. The position of the umpires is that they

may not decide unless appealed to by the players, or it is submitted by the marker.

Of the standing rules of the game, which are extremely simple, it has always seemed to the writer that there are two of rather doubtful justice.

The first has a glimmering resemblance to the rule at tennis that a 'past' docks a 'fault'; thus, if at rackets a player serves a fault which is not taken, then a good service which it, and the bully ends in a 'let,' the original fault is cancelled, and he starts afresh, which may obviously be no small advantage. The theory of a let surely should be that the players be put back *in statu quo ante*; but here the player puts himself in the way, and in a better position thereby. The case, of course, does not often arise, but that does not affect the justice or otherwise of this rule.

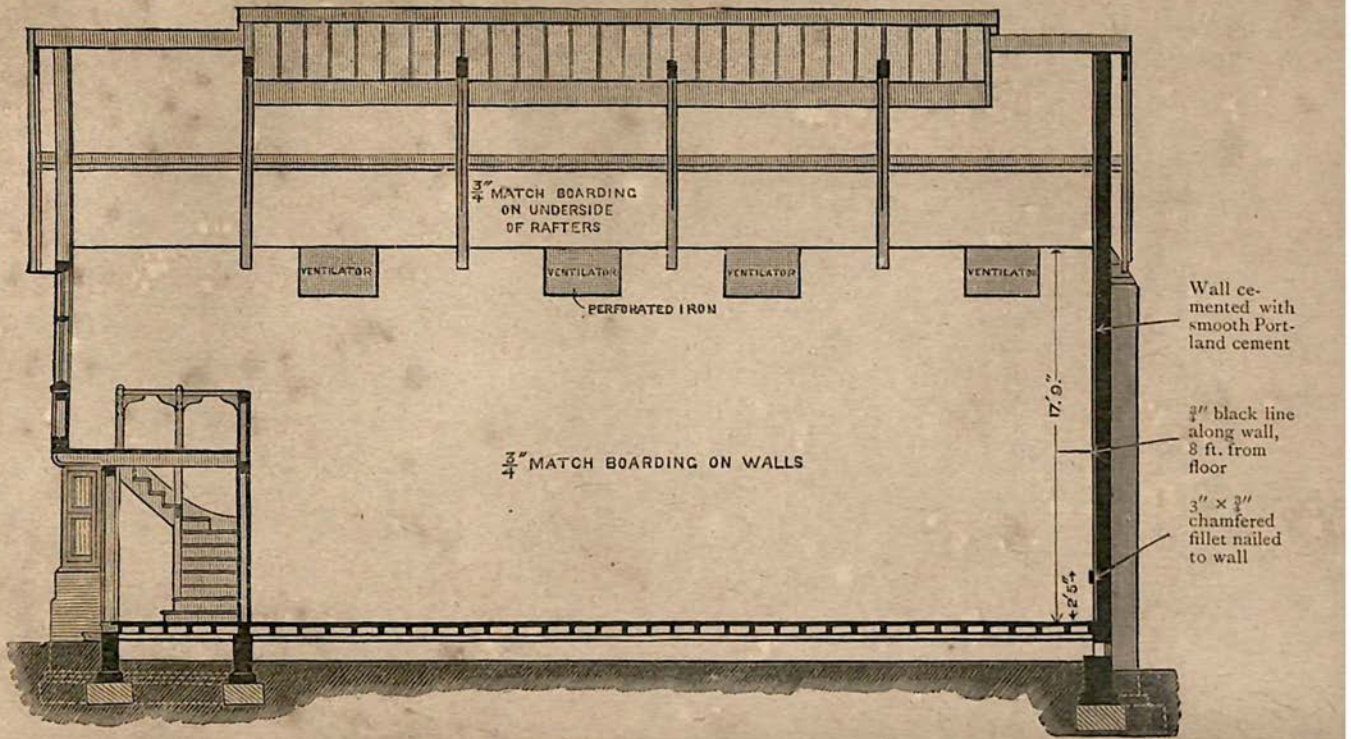
Another rule, which has the merit of being rough and ready, is that if a ball, before hitting the floor and the front wall, hits the striker's opponent *above the knee*, it is a let. It is so, no matter where the opponent, what his build, what the direction, or what the force (except to the personal comfort of that opponent) of the ball. Thus, if you get your opponent against the back-wall, and drive at him from the other end of the court and hit him above the knee, it might bring the game to an abrupt close; but it is conceived that on appeal the marker would have no option but to call it a 'let.' It is suggested that a better rule would be that it should be a question for the marker, subject to appeal to the umpires, whether the stroke would or would not have gone above the board.

Here end the observations on the practical part of the game; one observation connected with the subject of a rival game the writer feels tempted to make. A racket player whose privilege and pleasure it has been to watch the game of tennis played by Pettitt can hardly fail to be struck with the fact that rackets is no longer a thing not to be named among tennis players. Rackets used to be regarded as the game for the young, while tennis was reserved for such as are of riper years.

Recent performances have made inroads on this theory; and the successful appearance of youth in the tennis court, combined with the introduction of lawn-tennis, has perhaps contributed to the comparative desertion of the racket court.

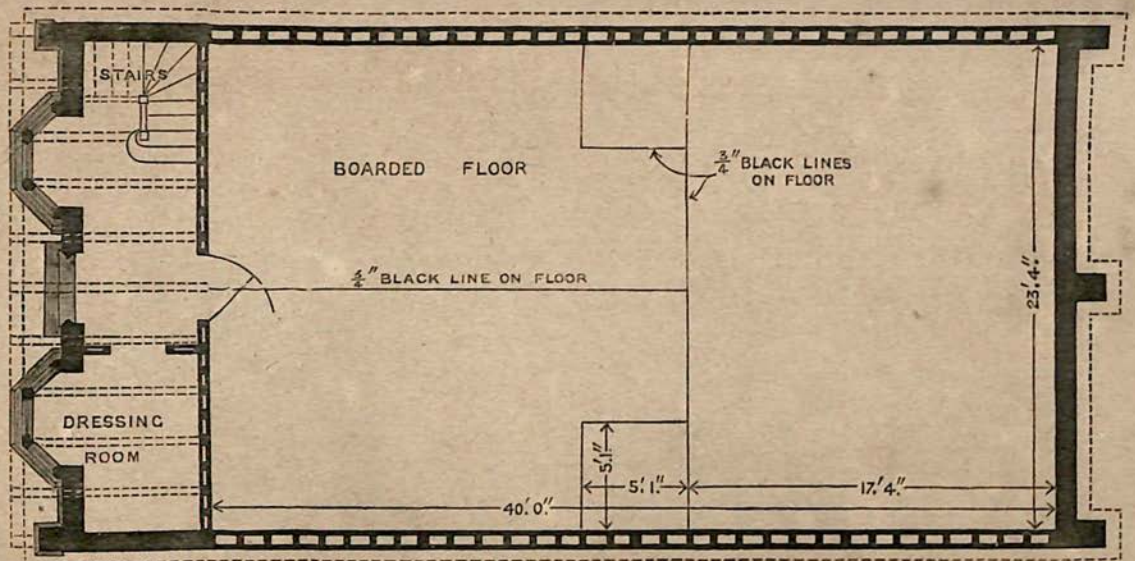
Any considerations, however, of the practical side of each of these games—and indeed, without desiring to entrench on the domain of cant, considerations on all games, if properly given and properly received, may well be applied to the larger sphere of life, which we all endeavour to brighten by a pursuit, nay, even a trespass in pursuit, of games—can hardly but be valuable for the practice of the others.

NOTE.—Mr. Gurney Buxton has kindly supplied a ground plan and section of the 'squash' racket court erected by him at Catton Hall near Norwich; engravings will be found on following pages. We have selected this as being in all respects perfect of its kind. The cost of this court was 360*l.*, but the outside walls are of wood. Brick would cost perhaps 20*l.* more. Mr. Holland-Hibbert at Munden near Watford, and Mrs. Charles Buxton at Fox Warren near Weybridge, have courts for the 'squash' game similar in many respects.




LONGITUDINAL SECTION OF 'SQUASH RACKET COURT'

*(Erected by Mr. Gurney Buxton at Catton Hall, Norwich)*




GROUND PLAN OF 'SQUASH RACKET COURT'

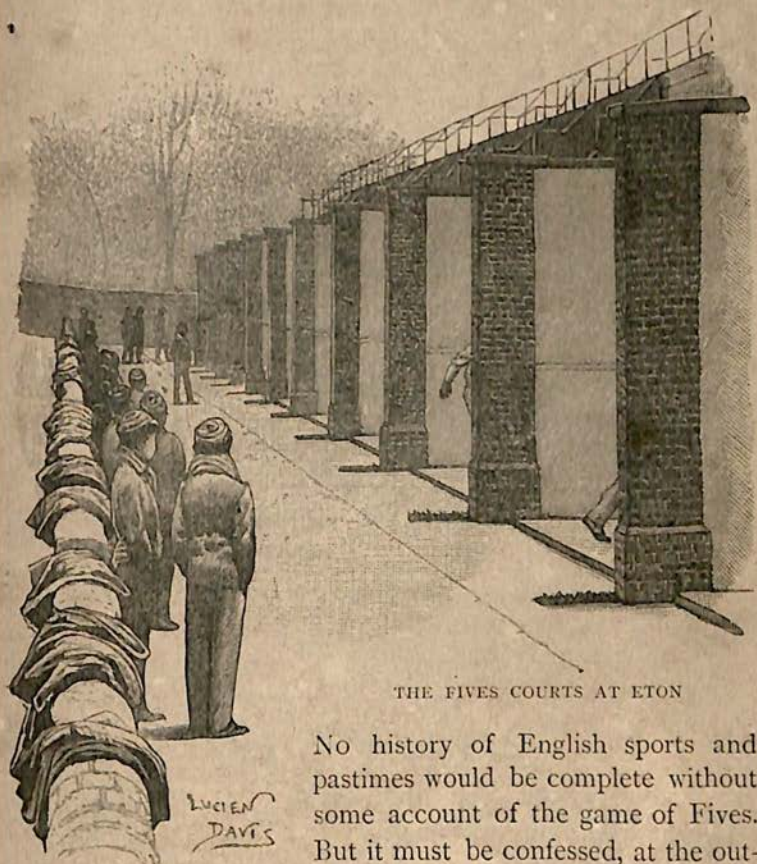
*(Erected by Mr. Gurney Buxton at Catton Hall, Norwich)*

# FIVES

BY

A. C. AINGER

# FIVES




THE FIVES COURTS AT ETON

No history of English sports and pastimes would be complete without some account of the game of Fives. But it must be confessed, at the outset, that there is but little to be told about the game which will interest the general reader. Fives is almost exclusively a game for boys. It has never taken root at the Universities. A dozen courts, at the outside, are found enough for the wants of fifteen hundred undergraduates at Cambridge.

Fifty courts are none too many for nine hundred boys at Eton. The number of those who continue fives players after the age of twenty-five is very small; and, for obvious reasons, these veterans are usually schoolmasters. Again, fives is entirely a game for amateurs. It has no professors who make their living and their renown as its teachers or exponents. It has no matches to be reported in newspapers with a minuteness of detail suitable to events of international importance. No fives player, as such, has ever had his portrait published in an illustrated journal, or has had the meanest article of dress in the hosiers' shops named after him. Indeed, the game is not one that tends to exalt the individual player. The only form of it really worth playing is the four-handed game, and in that the best of players must depend a great deal on the active and efficient co-operation of his partner. He cannot, as in some games, take the whole into his own hands without seriously damaging his own style of play, and to a great extent spoiling the game for all concerned. The best fives players, moreover, are nearly always so good in other branches of athletics that their renown in the fives courts is obscured by their brilliancy elsewhere. Alfred Lubbock, for instance—to quote the most famous Eton fives player of a past generation—has a name that is a household word for more important triumphs. Walter Hoare, another bygone champion, is better known as one of the best 'strokes' that ever won victories for the Dark Blue. The names of Lyttelton and Studd naturally suggest other volumes of this series or other chapters of this volume. And even in the case of the best players there is but little room for personal anecdote. The most hard-fought game, retrieved desperately ace by ace when one mistake would have been fatal, cannot be brought before the reader's mental vision like the record of some gallant stern chase between Putney and Mortlake, with all its alternations of hope and despondency, and its protracted agony where twenty minutes seems a lifetime. Nor do the fortunes of the game turn upon any single great stroke that converts defeat into victory. The best strokes pass

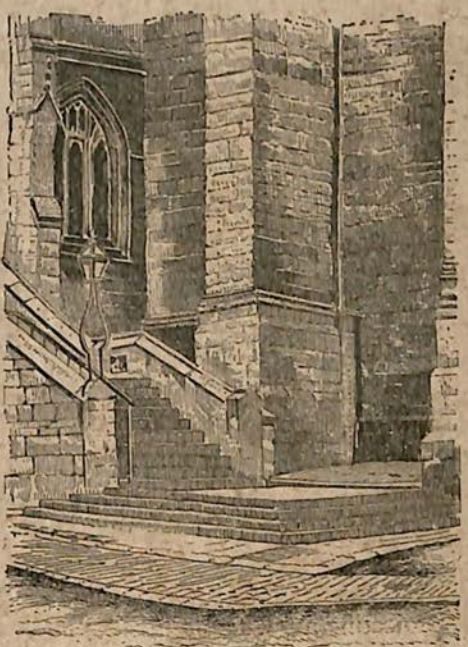
from the memory almost as soon as from the sight. The finest 'cut down' lasts about as long as a flash of lightning, which indeed it resembles in many ways. The longest and best contested 'bullies,' lasting perhaps for forty or fifty strokes, may end, and very often do end, in a 'let,' and, greatly as they may promote the enjoyment of the players, contribute nothing to the progress of the game. It is clear that in such a game there can be little to describe or remember. There can be no monumental performances, such as Cobden's over or Buckland's innings.

But, ill suited as the game may be for the purposes of the historian, there are good reasons for giving it a very high place, if not the highest of all, among outdoor games. It fulfils nearly every condition that a good game should fulfil. It is played in the open air, and not in a confined court. It demands a reasonable time only. An hour and a half or two hours on any one day are enough for the most vigorous. There are no long periods of inaction, but all the players are hard at work all the time. Every limb of the body—legs and arms alike, and left arm as much as right—is in active exercise. There is no danger of fractured limbs or overstrained muscles; the wind is not taxed too severely. It demands, like all good games, pluck and patience and good-temper. It is the most sociable of games. Cricket, no doubt, is sociable, but chiefly when you are not actually playing it. At football there is but little breath to spare for conversation. Tennis and racket courts are too noisy for anyone to speak except the marker. But in the fives court partners and adversaries are close together, the noise of the ball does not drown the voice, and there is plenty of opportunity for talk and chaff and laughter without interfering in the least with a businesslike game. No doubt other games have moments of more intense pleasure, but they are counterbalanced by moments of blacker despair. There is nothing in fives, no doubt, like the joy of a fine left-handed catch or a drive to the ropes. But there is nothing in fives like that walk to the pavilion after receiving one ball, or

like missing in his first over the man who saves the match for his side. So, too, a fine 'run down' at football, ending in a goal for your side, gives more pleasure than anything on a fives court can give. But fives has no record of broken collar-bones and twisted knees and sprained ankles and bleeding shins, which make the joys of football *matribus detestata*, and form a serious obstacle to playing in the case of those who cannot afford the risk of being laid on the sofa for a fortnight or so during the season. Fives, we assert, is the perfection of a game played, as a game should be, for its own sake, not leading to the gain of cups and ribbons and such-like personal distinctions, but giving wholesome exercise in abundance to every limb; demanding enough skill and temper to form a real amusement, a recreation for the head and a distraction for the thoughts; promoting friendly rivalry and good-fellowship without too much jealousy or excitement, and bringing together on fairly equal terms all ages, from fifteen to fifty.

And this being so, it seems not unnatural to ask why the game should not be much more widely known than it is—why it should be almost entirely confined to schools and schoolboys. There is absolutely no reason, as many, including the present writer, can testify, why a fives player should not continue to play with but little loss of activity or skill till he is well on for his half-century. The years as they glide by rob us of one athletic quality after another, but that which they attack first is always the wind. We can still look back on a not very remote boyhood when we begin to find that it is hard to keep up in a quick match at football, and we begin to prefer cricket grounds on which hits to the boundary need not be run out. But fives rarely gives rise to anything worse than a gentle panting, which half a minute's pause will allay. Of course it is difficult to resume any game after an interval of ten or fifteen years, and anyone who at forty years old attempts to do what he has not done for twenty years will very likely give way somewhere. But it is difficult to see why the number of fives courts all over the country should not be so largely increased that it should be

the rule and not the exception for all players to continue the game up to a ripe middle-age. A fives court takes up very little room, and is not expensive either in its original cost or in needful repairs. We will examine the question of cost in greater detail hereafter, but here it is enough to say that, if you have a wall against which to build it, a thoroughly good court can be built for 100*l*. Why does not every country house have its fives court as invariably as its billiard table Why does

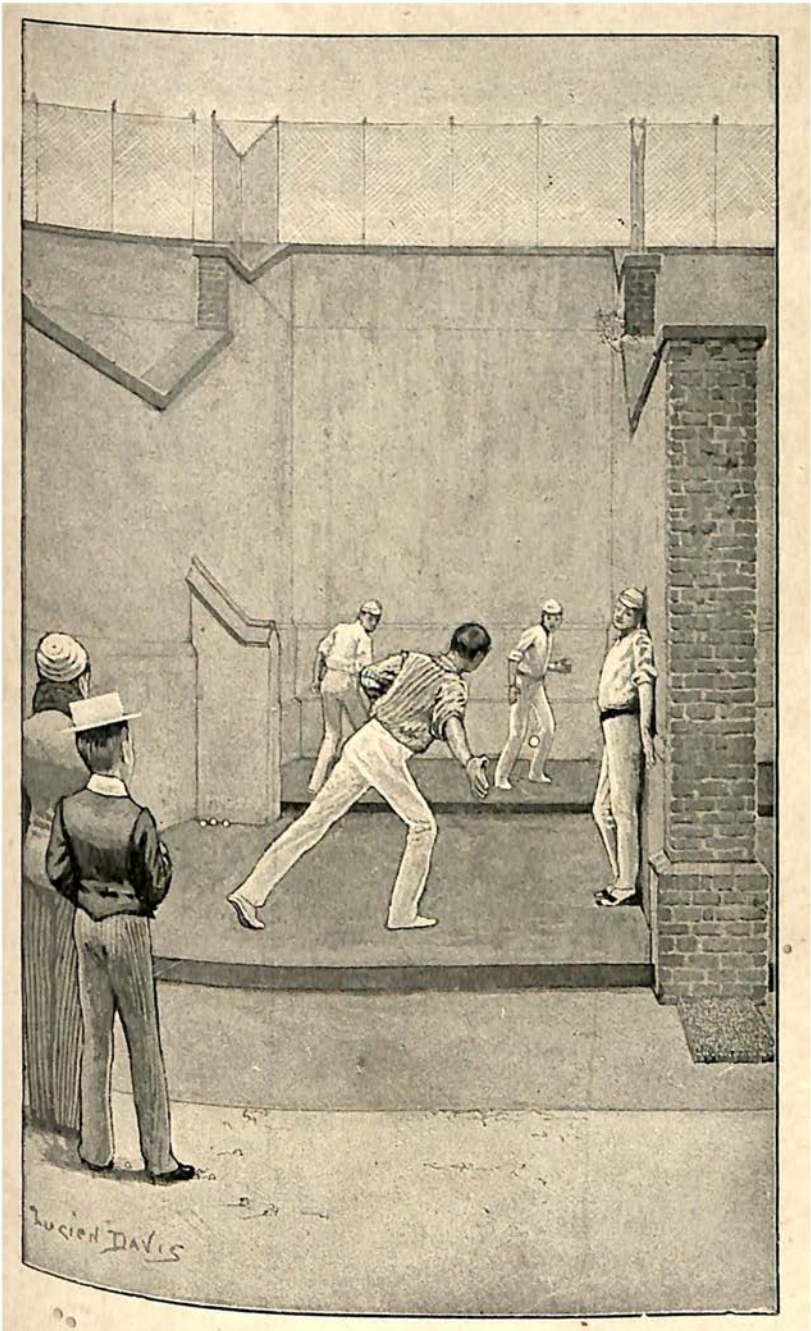


CHAPEL STEPS, ETON

not a court or two fill up a corner of every cricket ground? Even in crowded towns, where space is precious, there must be many unoccupied yards that could be used for the purpose—perhaps many roofs of houses that could be adapted to it. What a difference it would make in the lives of all those condemned every day to many hours of sedentary clerk's work if, instead of the railway journey or the dull walk home through

the weary streets, producing a feeling of dirt and fatigue, but no refreshment or recreation, they could get the pores well opened and the blood set in healthy motion and the brain rested by a thorough good game at fives! We believe that many employers of labour might do a great deal to promote happiness, and things more important than happiness, among their young men, if they would lay out a little money in providing them with healthy exercise every day, and they would reap their reward in getting better work out of them, to put the matter on the lowest ground. So much attention is nowadays being paid to this important matter, so many arrangements being made with a view to early closing or more frequent holidays, that a suggestion which has for its object regular daily recreation may be thought worthy of notice on more grounds than one.

It will not have escaped the notice of any attentive reader that the writer of this chapter is one who is familiar with the game of fives as played at Eton; and it will be as well to admit at once that his practical knowledge of the game ceases there. But in a book which proposes to deal with the game generally, it would be wrong to leave out of sight all the other forms of it which are found at other schools. Each variety has its own merits and its own admirers, and it is with no wish to depreciate these that the chief place is given to the Eton game. That game, like many others, originated in a happy accident. The stone balustrade of the Chapel steps, projecting a few feet on to the level space below, gave rise to the first 'pepper-box.' This little bit of low buttress, with its sloping top and its various angles, has modified every detail of the game. All other varieties of fives courts may be roughly said to resemble small racket courts. Some have only one wall—that against which the ball is hit; some have three—a front and two side-walls; others have a back-wall as well, and are nearly or quite enclosed In all alike the game is really a form of rackets played with the hand instead of a racket, and with a somewhat larger ball than is used in




FIVES AT ETON

that game. Hard low hitting, above a comparatively low line, is required; the rules are few and simple, and the result is first-rate exercise. A glance at an Eton court, with its buttress, its projections, its bevelled edges, its differences of level, will show that the game, whether better or worse, must inevitably be much more complicated, and must give rise to many more varieties of stroke. Etonians would say that in this the superiority of their game consists. Just as tennis is a more interesting game than rackets, so Eton fives, though at first sight its rules seem intricate, must needs be a more interesting game than the simpler kinds. This opinion is apparently beginning to be widely shared, and when new courts are built they are generally of the Eton type. Still there are several other forms of the court which deserve mention, both for the excellent game they afford and in some cases for their origin.

We ought to preface a description of the court with some account of the origin of the name. Why is the game called 'Fives'? It is a question that has often been asked, but as yet no absolutely satisfactory answer has been given. Two derivations are suggested, either of which is possible, but it must be admitted that neither of them is quite certain. The first, and perhaps the most obvious, is that the game derives its name from the five fingers of the hand. The 'bunch of fives,' though a slang expression, may lay claim to be one of the earliest instances of slang known to the human race, since, 'as every schoolboy knows,' it is found in the poems of Hesiod.[1] This derivation is supported also by the French name for tennis, 'jeu de paume,' 'palm play.' The palm of the hand, whether bare or gloved, is unquestionably the part used in playing fives, as formerly in playing tennis; but though the French term gives a sufficient reason why the game of fives, or 'hand tennis,' should get its name from the hand, it would seem more natural that the part of the hand chiefly employed

[1] πέντοζον, Hesiod, *Op. et dies*, 740.

should suggest the name rather than the fingers, which take a less active share. The other derivation is based upon a passage in Nichols' 'Progresses of Queen Elizabeth,' quoted by Strutt and other writers. 'The same day after dinner, about three of the clocke, ten of my Lord of Hartford's servants, all Somersetshire men, in a square greene court, before Her Majesties windowe, did lay up lines, squaring out the forme of a tennis court, and making a crosse line in the middle. In this square they (being stript out of their doublets) played, five to five, with the hand ball, at bord and cord (as they terme it), to so great liking of Her Highness.' For a full explanation of this passage the reader must be referred to Mr. Julian Marshall's 'Annals of Tennis,' p. 53. It is quoted here because some have seen in the contest of these Somersetshire men, 'five to five,' the origin of the name 'Fives,' and Mr. Marshall thinks that the total number of the players 'may well have given its name' to tennis. It is an obvious criticism that the game played on this occasion, 'to so great liking of Her Highness,' must have borne a singularly distant resemblance to our game of fives, but this objection, though weighty, is not fatal.

The origin of the game is as uncertain as the meaning of its name. It must undoubtedly be of very great antiquity. To throw a ball against a wall, and to strike or catch it on the rebound, is, one might almost say, an instinctive action as old as the human race. We might hope that Balbus, when at the outset of his career he 'built a wall,' had no less noble object in view than a game of fives. But unfortunately it must be admitted that we can find no traces in the writings of the classical period which would lead us to suppose that this great idea had dawned in those benighted ages. We would gladly claim the Princess Nausicaa for our patron saint. We would gladly believe that when Mæcenas went to play, and his two effeminate companions refused to accompany him on the ground of weak eyes and weak digestion, the prime minister of Augustus showed that, whatever might be his faults, he was, at all events, a fives

player. We would gladly hope that Martial, in some of his numerous epigrams that refer to games played with balls of different consistency and size, was thinking, though he has managed to express himself obscurely, of some undeveloped and incomplete form of the game we play. But we have no authority for supposing that the ancients ever rose to a higher conception than that of catching the ball and returning it, sometimes indeed with the left hand, for which let all credit be given to them. It is necessary to come to very modern times before we can find traces of the present game. The passage quoted above from Nichols certainly refers to something much more nearly resembling tennis, while the following description printed in Hone's 'Everyday Book,' on the authority of Mr. Fosbroke's 'Dictionary of Antiquities,' will hardly convince the reader that fives was played in the fourteenth century. 'In the fourteenth century there was a game at ball, where a line, called the *cord*, was traced upon the wall, below which the stroke was faulty. Some of the players were on foot; others had the two hands tied together, or played in a hollow cask.' A modern player would find these very cramped odds to give an opponent. A few lines lower down Hone quotes on the same authority an account which, though not actually connected with fives, is worth inserting here. '*Ball-play* was formerly played at Easter in churches, and statutes passed to regulate the size of the ball. The ceremony was as follows. The ball being received, the dean or his representative began an antiphone or chant, suited to Easter Day; then, taking the ball in his left hand, he commenced a dance to the tune, others of the clergy dancing round, hand in hand. At intervals the ball was handed or tossed by the dean to each of the choristers, the organ playing according to the dance and sport; at the conclusion of the anthem and dance they went and took refreshment.'

Besides the delicious pictures suggested by the above quotations, the excellent Hone prints a long extract from the 'Examiner' of February 17, 1819, giving a memoir, by Mr. Hazlitt, of one John Cavanagh, then recently dead, 'the famous

hand fives player.' We subjoin a few paragraphs, not only because they seem to us full of a just enthusiasm for the game, but also because they show very clearly what the game was at the beginning of the present century, and how much even then it differed from its modern namesake:—

'Died at his house in Burbage Street, St. Giles', John Cavanagh, the famous hand fives player. When a person dies who does any one thing better than anyone else in the world, which so many others are trying to do well, it leaves a gap in society. It is not likely that anyone will now see the game of fives played in its perfection for many years to come, for Cavanagh is dead and has not left his peer behind him. The game of fives is what no one despises who has ever played at it. It is the finest exercise for the body and the best relaxation for the mind. The Roman poet said that "Care mounted behind the horseman and stuck to his skirts." But this remark would not have applied to the fives player. He who takes to playing at fives is twice young. He feels neither the past nor the future "in the instant." Debts, taxes, "domestic treason, foreign levy, nothing can touch him further." He has no other wish, no other thought, from the moment the game begins, but that of striking the ball, of placing it, of *making* it! This Cavanagh was sure to do. Whenever he touched the ball there was an end of the chase. His eye was certain, his hand fatal, his presence of mind complete. He could do what he pleased, and he always knew exactly what to do. He saw the whole game and played it; took instant advantage of his adversary's weakness, and recovered balls as if by a miracle and from sudden thought that everyone gave for lost. He had equal power and skill, quickness and judgment. He could either outwit his antagonist by finesse or beat him by main strength. Sometimes when he seemed preparing to send the ball with the full swing of his arm, he would, by a slight turn of his wrist, drop it within an inch of the line. In general, the ball came from his hand, as if from a racket, in a straight horizontal line, so that it was in vain to attempt to overtake or

stop it. He was the best *uphill* player in the world: even when his adversary was fourteen he would play on the same or better, and, as he never flung away the game through carelessness or conceit, he never gave it up through laziness or want of heart. The only peculiarity of his play was that he never *volleyed*, but let the balls hop; but if they rose an inch from the ground he never missed having them. There was not only nobody equal but nobody second to him. It is supposed that he could give any other player half the game or beat them with his left hand. His service was tremendous. He once played Woodward and Meredith (two of the best players in England) together in the Fives Court, St. Martin's Street, and made seven and twenty aces following by services alone—a thing unheard of. He used frequently to play matches at Copenhagen House for wagers and dinners. The wall against which they play is the same that supports the kitchen chimney, and when the wall resounded louder than usual the cooks exclaimed, "Those are the Irishman's balls!" and the joints trembled on the spit.'

The exploits of this earth-shaking Irishman show clearly enough that the game he played, and the courts in which he played it, must have had little in common with the fives of the present day. Of no player could it be said nowadays, 'Whenever he touched the ball there was an end of the chase,' or 'bully,' as we should call it. Such crushing strokes are few and far between. A player, of whose game it should be a peculiarity that he 'never volleyed but let the balls hop,' would not be likely to reach a high rank. The 'service' has ceased to be 'tremendous,' and is accommodated to the wishes of the 'out-player,' of whom it is said in the Eton rules that he 'need not return the first or any "service" till he gets one to his mind.' From these and other indications, it is evident that the game as played by Cavanagh and his contemporaries has passed away, and the space at our disposal will be best employed in considering those forms of the game which have survived and are likely to survive for some time to come.

If we dismiss in a few sentences the game as played at Rugby, Winchester, and many other schools, it is not from any wish to depreciate the merits of those varieties of fives. They are undoubtedly first-rate games, and in the eyes of many their simplicity may be one of their greatest recommendations. But it is clear that this very simplicity leaves but little to describe. The dimensions vary; the height of the 'line' is not the same in all; some have a 'back' wall; some are closed like small racket courts. In some courts at Winchester, for instance, the left-hand wall has a projection resembling, on a small scale, the 'tambour' in a tennis court, and calculated to produce similar irregularities in the subsequent course of balls coming from the front-wall against it. Wherever the buttress on the left-hand wall is found it is derived originally from the Eton 'pepper-box,' and the complications to which it gives rise will be noticed hereafter. Consequently we have at this point to deal with square or oblong courts with the floor level, not as in the Eton court divided into two distinct areas by a step, and the surface of the walls, as a rule, unbroken by any projections or intentional slopes or ledges. An exact account of the slight differences which are to be found in the courts or in the rules of the game, as played in different parts of England, would have but little interest for the general reader, while it would be superfluous for those who know the game in question. It is moreover impossible for one who has never played the particular form of fives endeared by long associations at Winchester or Rugby to speak with any certainty or authority on that which constitutes good or bad play, on the respective duties of partners, on crushing strokes or on those which put a player at his adversary's mercy, or on any of the finer details of the game. It is evident that, given a court such as we have described, with a well-laid floor, smooth walls, a low 'line,' a good light, and four active players, the 'bullies' are likely to last a long time, and in many cases to depend for their issue upon physical endurance as much as upon hard hitting and skill acquired by long practice, but in any case the result is sure

to be a good game, exercising every muscle of the body, and calling into play a large amount of judgment, temper, and perseverance.

The game in such a court is also an excellent one when only two players are engaged—perhaps even better than the four-game, and in this respect it has an advantage over the Eton game, which, when played by only two, is usually confined to the inner court, and, though giving certain opportunities for skill to show itself, rarely admits of much hard hitting or produces an interesting contest.

It is notoriously difficult to make the game of tennis intelligible to a looker-on who has never played it. The introduction of lawn tennis has lessened this difficulty in a slight degree, but still the strange terms employed—the double scoring of strokes and chases, the crossing and recrossing of the players, the apparently meaningless way in which they take some balls and leave others—these and many other details make a seat in the 'dedans' next to an inquisitive and ignorant stranger a most undesirable position. It is equally well known, however, that all these difficulties disappear very quickly as soon as the novice begins to play the game himself. In a less degree, perhaps, but still in a very great degree, this is true of the game of fives as played at Eton. If anyone with no previous knowledge of the game will consult the plan of an Eton court on page 426, and will read the rules of the game printed on pp. 463–466, he will, we fear, arise from the perusal a sadder but not a much wiser man. For many years these rules were simply a matter of oral tradition. Most of the strokes in the game, and many details of the position of the players, had received names coined by the rich inventiveness of some forgotten schoolboy's mind and stamped with the sanction of succeeding generations. It was not until the year 1877 that the present writer, in conjunction with several clear-headed friends, was moved to formulate and codify these ill-defined and fluctuating regulations. But it was not an easy task. The jealousy of a fond conservatism forbade the slightest alteration or simplification. Every

minute detail consecrated by the usage of our forefathers was to be preserved intact. One modification only, still regretted by some old players, and one addition (the 'setting' of the game as in rackets) did the compilers permit themselves. With these exceptions the rules remain as when the game was first played on the first Eton fives court, depicted on p. 415. Little did Henry the Sixth's architect think when he planned those buttresses and that flight of stairs with its stone balustrade that he was originating a game which bids fair to last as long as the chapel itself. But the rules are undoubtedly complicated, and, unless the non-Etonian player has a public schoolboy's sympathy for all efforts to preserve every vestige of the past, he may with some show of reason complain that Rule 13 (on saving 'good 'uns') or Rule 14 (on 'blackguard cut') adds materially to the intricacy of the game without increasing its interest to an appreciable extent. We can only assure him that the inconvenience arising from these seemingly complicated rules is quite insignificant, and if he will only begin to play the game it will disappear at once and for ever.

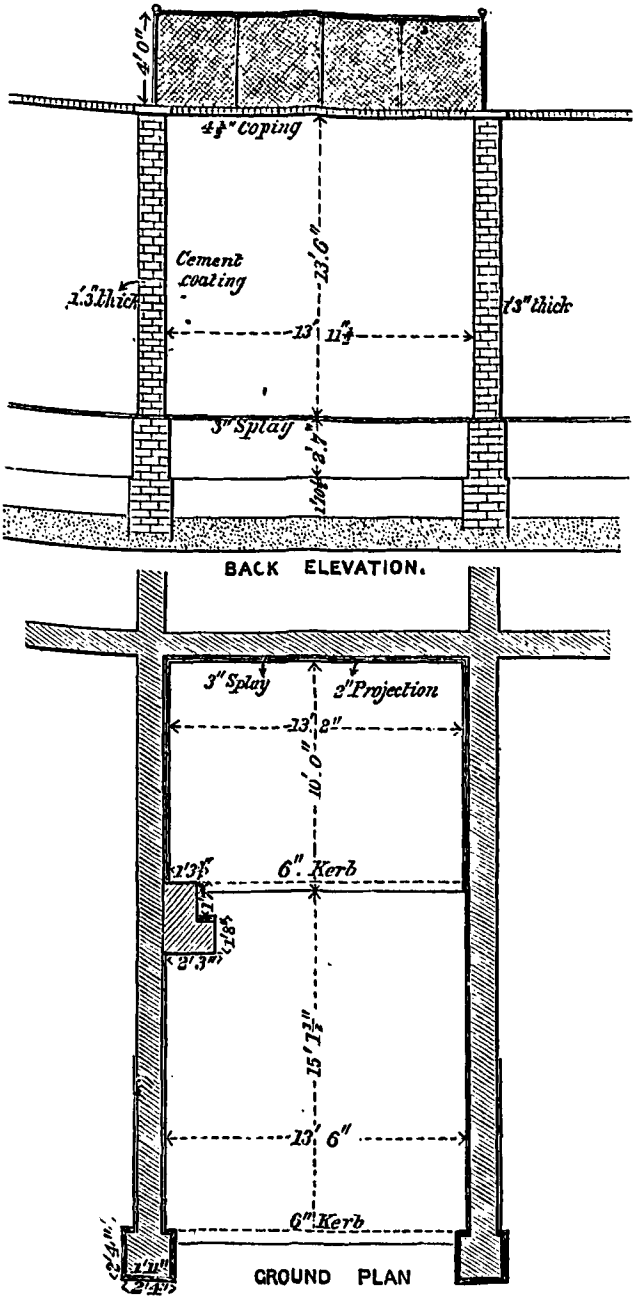
The history of the rise of the Eton game is, so far as we can ascertain, brief and simple. Up to the year 1840 the court on the Chapel steps already mentioned was the only existing Eton fives wall. In that year the first regular courts were built, and it must have needed some boldness on the part of the original projectors to reproduce with Chinese fidelity every detail which the architect of the Chapel had designed for his balustrade and buttress, to preserve the difference of level between the inner and the outer court, to keep the line at the height at which accident had placed it, and, by adding to the outer court two side-walls, similar to but lower than those of the inner court, to complete the existing game in all its details. No change has been made or needed in their design, and the latest built courts are exact copies of the earliest, with a little more accuracy of measurement, and the substitution of cement all over the walls for stone on the front-walls and brick elsewhere. In 1847 the

head-master, Dr. Hawtrey, laid the foundation-stone of some additional courts, and was greeted on the occasion with a broad-sheet of epigrams upon the game in Latin, Greek, French, German, and Italian. These courts, some six or eight in number, we cannot say sufficed the school, but at all events were all that existed till the year 1870, when present Etonians took the matter in hand and raised among themselves a sum sufficient to build eight new courts on another site. Since that date these courts have twice been added to—the institution of 'House Courts,' which we commend to the notice of other schools, having given a great impulse to the matter—and at present the school has fifty courts, and finds them none too many. Many courts of the same type have meanwhile been built at the Universities and at other schools, and not a few have been added to private houses. Thus within a space of about forty years Eton fives has permanently crystallised into its present form, and seems likely in the future to rank with tennis and rackets as a game which can only be rightly played under fixed rules and in a court of a fixed shape and measurement, and indeed as the one recognised game of its kind.

This being so, it is well to urge strongly on any who may be thinking of building an Eton fives court that they cannot be too particular in obtaining accurate measurements down to the smallest details. The breadth of the ledges and the angle they form with the wall behind them are much more important matters than they at first sight appear. The top of the buttress must not be finished off according to the fancy of the builder, but must reproduce the exact slope and the exact moulding shown in the plan. The piers at the end of the outer court must project beyond the side-wall just so much as is marked and no more. The ledge along the outer court must on no account be omitted; on the contrary, it must be as carefully measured as the 'line' on the front-wall. Each of these points and many others, however unimportant they seem, in reality make a great difference, and increase in no small degree

the amount of skill and judgment which the game demands. No doubt the omission of some of these ledges and the alteration of the 'pepper-box' into a square block would make the game much simpler and easier, but such a court would be no more an Eton fives wall than a tennis court would deserve to be called so without 'tambour,' 'grille,' or 'galleries.'

The leading features of the game may be briefly described. The in-player, who serves the ball, is at the beginning of the 'bully' the only one out of the four players who stands on the inner court. His place is nearer the left-hand than the right-hand wall: in many cases he is almost leaning against the 'pepper-box.' (An explanation of any technical terms here used will be found in the subjoined rules.) The other three players form a triangle on the outer court, in the manner described in Rule 3. The service must hit first the front-wall above the line, and then the right-hand side-wall, and must touch the ground first on the off-wall. It is usually an overhand toss, slow and high, the object being to give the out-player a fair and easy stroke, and it cannot under any circumstances win or lose an ace. The return of the service, called the 'first cut,' is made in one of two ways which are described fully in Rule 6. In connection with the history of the game, it is worth recording that a third way of returning the service was formerly allowable. This was that the ball when returned should hit first the left-hand side-wall and then the front-wall anywhere above the line. A moment's thought will show the reader that a return of this kind would in many cases hit the server should he remain upright in the place from which he served the ball. Consequently it was usual for the out-player, if he intended to adopt this return, to give notice of his intention by shouting the word 'Round!'—a signal to the server to consult his own safety by ducking his head or crossing to the right-hand side of the court. The modification in the rules alluded to above was the abolition of this kind of 'first cut.' It had for some time fallen into disuse, except among a few old stagers,




GROUND PLAN FIVES COURT

and the modern player, unless warned before the game began, was very likely to get a black eye as a penalty for disregarding a signal of which he probably had never heard. This and other reasons were deemed sufficient to lead to the abolition of the stroke, but there is something to be said in its favour. Its existence forced the server, for his own sake, to stand more in the middle of the court than he stands at present, and to that extent put him in a less favourable position for returning the 'first cut,' thereby giving a proportionate advantage to the out-player. The expediency of this change in the rules is a matter of opinion; there are probably not a few who, like the present writer, regret the alteration, but have no desire to reverse it.

The two methods of returning the service permitted by the rules in practice amount to four, according to the strength with which the ball is hit. (1) The most common and the most deadly is a stroke hit with full force first against the right-hand-wall and then the front-wall, as nearly as may be at the angle where they join. The ball when thus hit naturally flies across the court in the direction of the 'pepper-box.' It is frequently volleyed by the in-player, but to do this with a hard-hit ball needs a good eye and a quick hand, and the power of doing so with certainty is generally the first part of his game which a veteran finds slipping away from him. If not volleyed, the ball sometimes goes into the 'hole,' which generally brings the 'bully' to an end; more frequently, however, it rebounds from the 'pepper-box;' the miscellaneous angles of which cause great variety in its course, and need to be carefully judged by the in-player, who, in anticipation of his stroke, which in most cases he will have to take with the left hand, has turned round with his back to the front-wall and his face towards the 'pepper-box.' Not unfrequently, however, the ball misses the buttress altogether, and passes on to the outer court—an easy stroke for the in-player's partner. The out-player, immediately after hitting the first cut, ought to step on to the inner court, so that the ball, if it reaches the off court, will pass behind him. In this way only can the player on the

off court get a fair stroke at the ball. It is, no doubt, to the advantage of the out-player, with a view to the future, to let such a ball pass in front of him; but this is an advantage to which he has no right: his stroke was a bad one, and he deserves to suffer for it. (2) The service may be returned as above, but with a gentle blow, hitting the right-hand-wall at some distance from its junction with the front-wall. Such a stroke cannot usually be volleyed, and not unfrequently makes a difficult return for the in-player, and causes some confusion between him and his partner. (3) A hard low hit against the front-wall only is often a very effective 'first cut.' The ball should travel the whole length of both courts, almost grazing the right-hand-wall. It sometimes hits the pier of the outer court and rebounds into the court, almost always out of reach. More often it creates in the mind of the player who has to return it a doubt as to its intentions, which is often fatal. In any case it may prove a 'scraper,' a class of stroke which may hurt the fingers and cannot often be returned with much effect. Obviously, moreover, this is a useful first cut when the in-player's partner is the weaker player of the pair, and may prove a cheap way of getting rid of a troublesome opponent. (4) A similar stroke, if very gently hit, is often advantageous, as tending to create confusion between partners, and to leave whichever of them takes the ball in a less favourable position.

After the 'service' and the 'first cut' the ball is returned alternately by either side in accordance with Rules 1, 2, and 7. As a general rule, hard low hitting is most effective, and certainly makes the best game. The usual object is to hit the 'pepper-box' on the rebound, as a ball which goes fairly into the 'hole' seldom comes out again, and in any case the numerous ledges and angles render its course difficult to calculate. Useful strokes may also be made, which, on the rebound, fly just over the 'pepper-box' towards the left-hand outside corner of the wall. Unless volleyed—and this can only be done by an experienced and fairly tall player—they usually have to be returned with the left hand, and often are fruitful in

calamity. It cannot be impressed too strongly on young players that, except in some special cases, the ball should be returned against the front-wall only, and should not hit the side-walls except on the rebound. Experience will soon enable a player to know when he has got his opponents into such a position that a stroke hitting the side-wall first, in the manner of a 'first cut' (No. 1), will be likely to pay in the middle of a 'bully.'

The volley is constantly employed both on and off wall, but especially the former. It is very useful as a defensive stroke, and still more so in those ecstatic moments of the game when your adversary has left you a 'cut down' and you take advantage thereof with every muscle of the body. It is sometimes worth while trying to make the ball on its rebound strike your adversary on the head or body. Experience will soon show when such a stroke is possible. It may hurt his head a little, for which you had better apologise; it is more likely to hurt his feelings, especially if he is not quite as active as formerly, and for this no apology is necessary.

It is clear from the above description of the game—if indeed anything is clear from the description of a game—that in all the above strokes there is very little room for 'fluking.' Some strokes may have better or worse luck than they deserve, and players rarely fail to comment on them from their own point of view. But there is one stroke which invariably ends a 'bully,' for the best of players cannot return a 'shooter' 'with a single blow of the hand or wrist.' Such strokes occur when the ball on its rebound strikes the exact angle of the 'step,' which divides the court into two portions; less frequently, but still sometimes they occur, when the ball, under similar conditions, strikes the extreme angle of the outer court floor and shoots thence on to the gravel outside. A quarter of an inch farther and it would have been a 'good 'un,' and counted against the striker. As it is, the reverse is the case. Like many other parts of the game, this particular stroke has a name of its own, and is called, and likely to be called, a 'Johnny Yonge' by

thousands who would be puzzled to give an account of the origin of the title. There is a legend to account for it, of which we do not guarantee the truth, but the last person to take offence at it would, we are sure, be the good-natured eponymous hero himself. It is said that while other players are wont to ascribe such strokes to the kind influence of their propitious stars, the good old fives player who has given them his name claimed them as the result of sound judgment and nicely calculated distance.

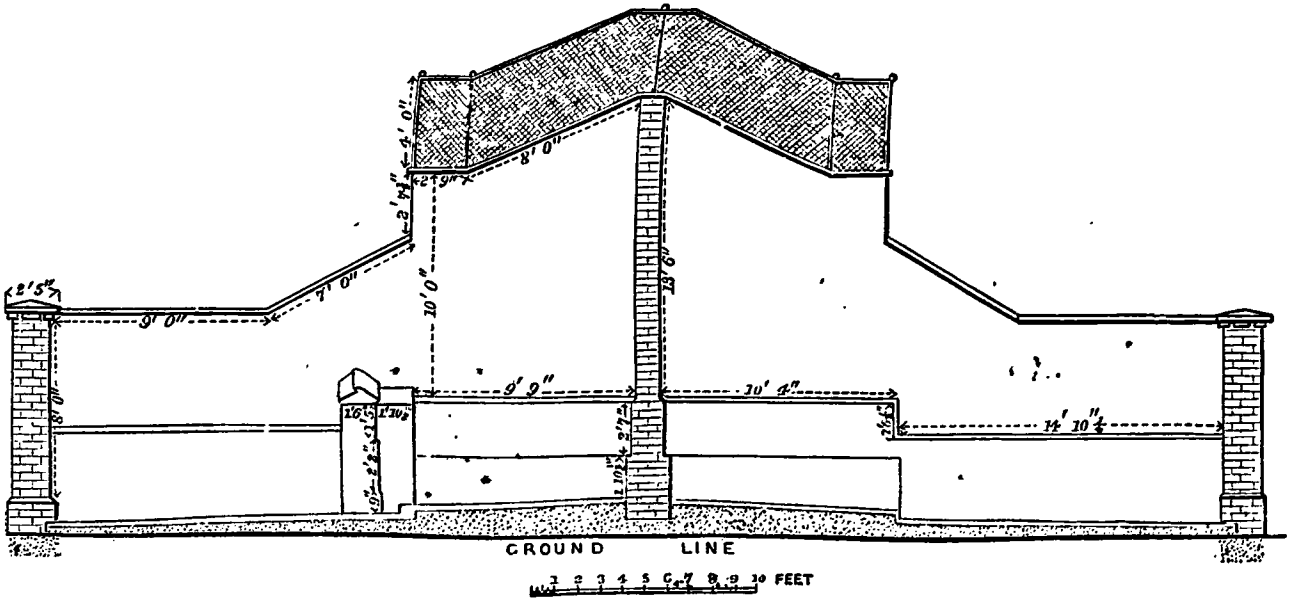
Notwithstanding the numerous ways in which a 'bully' may be brought to end, it sometimes, when good players are engaged, lasts a long time; thirty or forty strokes is no uncommon number, while a much larger number—seventy or eighty—is sometimes reached. 'Lets' are more frequent than at rackets—indeed, no unimportant part of the game is the art of getting out of the way; but though some players claim 'lets' more often than others, mutual courtesy in the matter is the almost invariable rule; the services of an umpire are seldom employed and little needed, and on this particular point his decision is very rarely invited.

The rules connected with 'blackguard cut' (Rule 14) come into force when either side has reached 'game ball.' The object of them is clearly enough to hamper the in-player and benefit his opponent, who, if he keeps cool, insists upon a service that suits him, and hits it as he intends, can often stave off defeat again and again. A smart stroke rebounding from the 'pepper-box' is difficult for the server from his cramped position to reach, while a stroke travelling fast from the front-wall to the extreme left-hand corner will often puzzle his partner. Sometimes the two rear players on the off-wall change places for this stroke, if the partner of the in-player thinks he will thereby get a better chance.

Odds, when given, consist of so many aces towards the game. It would no doubt be possible to devise some means of cramping the stronger player's game, but the result would probably not be satisfactory.

It only remains to say a few words about the expense of a fives court. It must be remembered that the court is exposed to the weather, and unless strongly built will be sure to give way somewhere. Considerable economy has been effected in courts recently built by the substitution of cement for stone in the facing of the front wall, and to a great extent in the 'pepper-box.' Still it would be a mistake to aim too much at cheapness, as it would probably mean bad material and careless measurement. The courts in the Timbralls at Eton are built back to back. They stand on gravelly soil, and are liable to occasional floods, which rendered it needful that they should have a solid concrete foundation. They were, of course, built with a view to durability and long wear, and the contract for building them was made with a local builder who could be relied upon for good work and material, and who took a pride in carrying out the work well. Under these circumstances they cost 250*l.* a pair. It is probable that, had competition been invited, the cost could have been brought lower than this. However, the work was well done and has stood the weather satisfactorily. In any place where much building is going on we have no doubt that a thoroughly good court might be built for 100*l.*, supposing a wall already existed against which it could be placed. A great saving might be effected by laying down the floor in asphalte instead of stone paving, and we are told that courts so floored have been found to answer very well. Once well built the court needs little repair. A little pointing occasionally to the joints of the floor, and more rarely a patch of cement on one of the walls, is all that is required. A more serious matter is for the stone cap of the 'pepper-box' to split from frost, but this does not often happen.

The court is faced with cement, which in the Eton courts has been left its natural colour, originally almost white, but growing dingy with time. This change, so far, is no doubt an advantage, but it is a question whether the plan of using black cement, adopted in some courts recently built at Harrow, is in all respects an improvement. Unless in direct sunlight, the




ELEVATION FIVES COURT

FE

white cement is not found too bright, while plenty of light is very needful for the game.

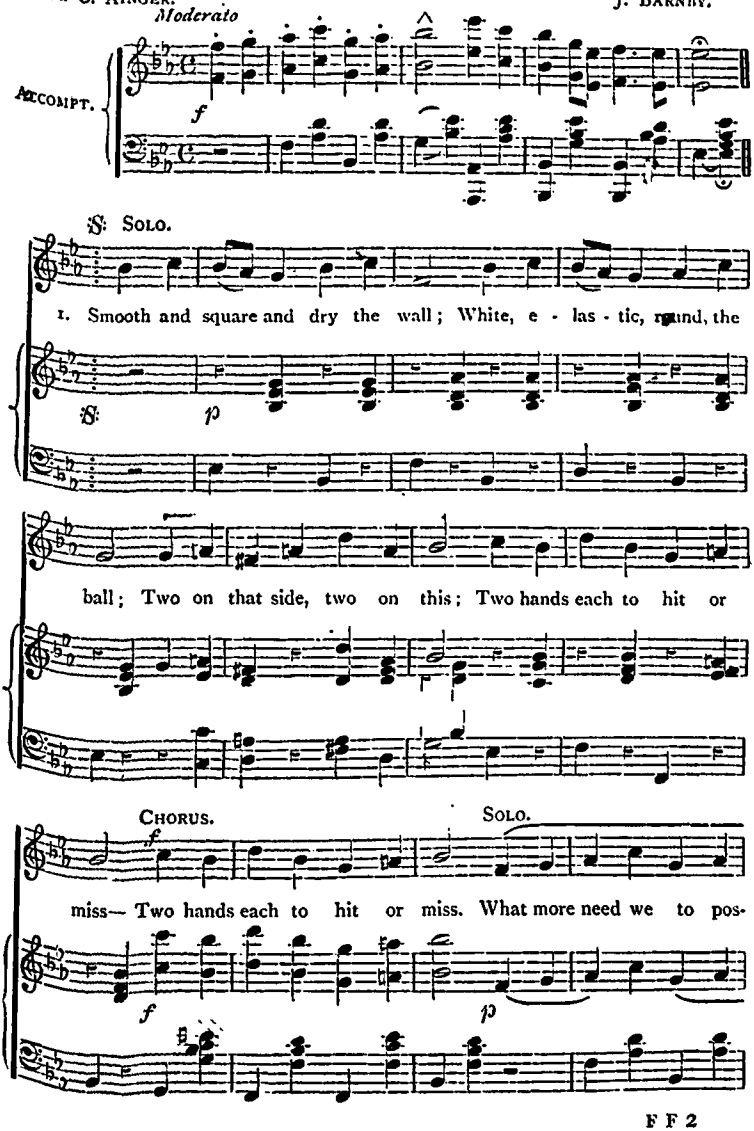
There are no closed courts at Eton, but several have been built in other places. It is a question of expense, of light, and to some extent of health. A thoroughly rain-proof glass roof is hard to obtain, and necessarily involves bad ventilation. In hot weather it would be unendurable. On the other hand a very little rain spoils the game altogether. No combination of the two systems to suit the weather seems possible.

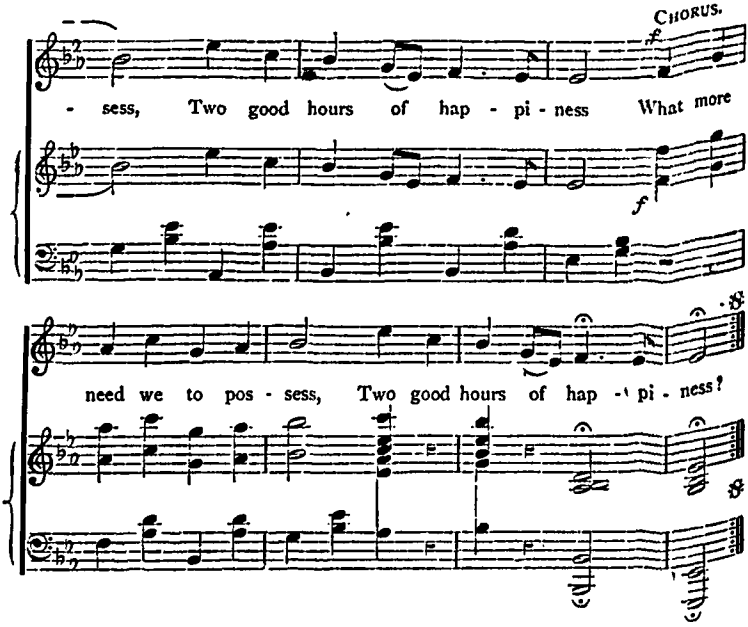
The other requirements of the game are few and simple. The use of fives shoes is as universal now as it was unheard of thirty years ago, and is obviously desirable, if not essential. Gloves are almost invariably worn, padded and faced with leather according to the player's taste. A very thick glove is an obstacle to good play; on the other hand, too thin a glove will not save the wearer's hand from bruises which may for a time stop his playing altogether. The weight of the ball is somewhat more than an ounce and a quarter. A good ball on a dry court will generally serve for a game, and a game lasts about twenty minutes. Balls are apt to vary more than is desirable in elasticity and durability, and are not always perfectly round; but on the whole those supplied by good makers are found satisfactory.

We ask permission to end this chapter with a few simple stanzas, set to music by a well-known composer. They are entitled 'A Song of Fives.'

# A Song of Fives

A. C. AINGER. *Moderato* J. BARNBY.


ACCOMPT.
f
SOLO.
1. Smooth and square and dry the wall; White, e - las - tic, round, the
p
ball; Two on that side, two on this; Two hands each to hit or
CHORUS.
f
SOLO.
miss— Two hands each to hit or miss. What more need we to pos-
f
p




2

Send the 'service' slow and high;
Hold your tongue, and mind your eye;
Turn and twist, and duck and dance;
Volley, when you see your chance— ;
Volley, when you see your chance
Hit them hard, and hit them low;
Thus your score will upwards go!
Hit them hard, &c.

3

Aces after aces get;
Shun the unprogressive let;
Slowly, surely, onward crawl;
Set the game at 'fourteen all'—
Set the game at 'fourteen all'!
Blackguards gain not honour, but
Honour gain by 'blackguard cut'!
Blackguards gain, &c.

4

From the moment you begin
Do your level best to win;
Cheer your partner; wipe your shoes;
Keep your temper, win or lose—
Keep your temper, win or lose.
If you miss it, don't be vexed;
Badly this time—better next!
If you miss it, &c.

5

Oft you'll think, in after lives:
What is life?—a game at Fives:
Partners to their partners true;
Courteous to their rivals, too—
Courteous to their rivals, too.
Here and there alike the aim
In the end to win the game!
Here and there, &c.

6

Oft in life you'll meet with knocks
'Gainst a harder pepper-box;
Fingers scraped and fingers bruised;
Ball and player roughly used—
Ball and player roughly used.
Till 'cut down,' or slow or fast,
Into 'dead man's hole' at last!
Till 'cut down,' &c.

7

So let Fives its lessons teach:
Hit all balls within your reach;
If you fail for want of pluck,
Don't abuse your rival's luck—
Don't abuse your rival's luck!
Everyone can win who tries,
For the struggle is the prize.
Everyone can win, &c.

# APPENDIX

## *LAWN TENNIS*

## I

## *THE WINNERS OF THE PRINCIPAL TOURNAMENTS*

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### ALL ENGLAND CHAMPIONSHIPS

(*Played at Wimbledon*)

| | *Gentlemen's Singles* | *Ladies' Singles* |
|---|---|---|
| 1877 | S. W. Gore | — |
| 1878 | P. F. Hadow | — |
| 1879 | J. T. Hartley | — |
| 1880 | J. T. Hartley | — |
| 1881 | W. Renshaw | — |
| 1882 | W. Renshaw | — |
| 1883 | W. Renshaw | — |
| 1884 | W. Renshaw | Miss M. Watson |
| 1885 | W. Renshaw | Miss M. Watson |
| 1886 | W. Renshaw | Miss Bingley |
| 1887 | H. F. Lawford | Miss L. Dod |
| 1888 | E. Renshaw | Miss L. Dod |
| 1889 | W. Renshaw | Mrs. G. W. Hillyard (Miss Bingley) |

*Gentlemen's Doubles* (*Played at Oxford*)

| | |
|---|---|
| 1879 | L. R. Erskine and H. F. Lawford |
| 1880 | W. Renshaw and E. Renshaw |
| 1881 | W. Renshaw and E. Renshaw |
| 1882 | J. T. Hartley and R. T. Richardson |
| 1883 | C. W. Grinstead and C. E. Welldon |

(*Played at Wimbledon*)

| | |
|---|---|
| 1884 | W. Renshaw and E. Renshaw |
| 1885 | W. Renshaw and E. Renshaw |
| 1886 | W. Renshaw and E. Renshaw |
| 1887 | P. B. Lyon and H. W. W. Wilberforce |
| 1888 | W. Renshaw and E. Renshaw |
| 1889 | W. Renshaw and E. Renshaw |

*Ladies' Doubles* (*Played at Buxton*)

| | |
|---|---|
| 1885 | Mrs. Watts and Miss Bracewell |
| 1886 | Miss L. Dod and Miss M. Langrishe |
| 1887 | Miss L. Dod and Miss M. Langrishe |
| 1888 | Miss L. Dod and Miss M. Langrishe |
| 1889 | Miss M. Steedman and Miss B. Steedman |

*Ladies' and Gentlemen's Doubles*

(*Played at the Northern Association Tournament*)

| | |
|---|---|
| 1888 | E. Renshaw and Mrs. G. W. Hillyard |
| 1889 | J. C. Kay and Miss L. Dod |

## IRISH CHAMPIONSHIPS

| | *Gentlemen's Singles* | *Ladies' Singles* |
|---|---|---|
| 1879 | V. Goold (St. Leger) | Miss M. Langrishe |
| 1880 | W. Renshaw | Miss Meldon |
| 1881 | W. Renshaw | no match |
| 1882 | W. Renshaw | Miss Abercromby |
| 1883 | E. Renshaw | Miss M. Langrishe |
| 1884 | H. F. Lawford | Miss M. Watson |
| 1885 | H. F. Lawford | Miss M. Watson |
| 1886 | H. F. Lawford | Miss M. Langrishe |
| 1887 | E. Renshaw | Miss L. Dod |
| 1888 | E. Renshaw | Mrs. Hillyard |
| 1889 | W. J. Hamilton | Miss L. Martin |

*Gentlemen's Doubles*

| | |
|---|---|
| 1879 | E. Elliott and R. Kellie |
| 1880 | H. F. Lawford and A. Mulholland |
| 1881 | W. Renshaw and E. Renshaw |
| 1882 | E. de S. Browne and P. Aungier |

## IRISH CHAMPIONSHIPS—*continued*

| | *Gentlemen's Doubles* | *Ladies' Doubles* |
|---|---|---|
| 1883 | W. Renshaw and E. Renshaw | — |
| 1884 | W. Renshaw and E. Renshaw | — |
| 1885 | W. Renshaw and E. Renshaw | Miss Watson and Miss M. Watson |
| 1886 | W. J. Hamilton and H. K. McKay | Miss Butler and Miss L. Martin |
| 1887 | W. J. Hamilton and T. S. Campion | Miss L. Martin and Miss Stannell |
| 1888 | W. J. Hamilton and T. S. Campion | Miss M. Steedman and Miss B. Steedman |
| 1889 | E. W. Lewis and G. W. Hillyard | Miss L. Martin and Miss Stannell |

## SCOTTISH CHAMPIONSHIPS

| | *Gentlemen's Singles* | *Ladies' Singles* |
|---|---|---|
| 1878 | J. Patten | — |
| 1879 | L. M. Balfour | — |
| 1880 | J. Patten | — |
| 1881 | J. G. Horn | — |
| 1882 | J. G. Horn | — |
| 1883 | J. G. Horn | — |
| 1884 | R. Gamble | — |
| 1885 | P. B. Lyon | — |
| 1886 | P. B. Lyon | Miss Boulton |
| 1887 | H. Grove | Miss Butler |
| 1888 | P. B. Lyon | Miss Butler |
| 1889 | E. de S. Browne | Miss Butler |

*Gentlemen's Doubles*

| | |
|---|---|
| 1878 | A. G. Murray and C. C. Maconochie |
| 1879 | A. G. Murray and C. C. Maconochie |
| 1880 | A. G. Murray and C. C. Maconochie |
| 1881 | J. G. Horn and W. Horn |
| 1882 | C. B. Russell and M. G. Lascelles |
| 1883 | F. A. Fairlie and A. L. Davidson |
| 1884 | P. B. Lyon and H. B. Lyon |
| 1885 | E. W. Lewis and R. M. Watson |
| 1886 | P. B. Lyon and H. B. Lyon |
| 1887 | P. B. Lyon and H. B. Lyon |
| 1888 | P. B. Lyon and H. B. Lyon |
| 1889 | A. Thomson and J. H. Conyers |

## WELSH CHAMPIONSHIPS

| | *Gentlemen's Singles* | *Ladies Singles* |
|---|---|---|
| 886 | E. de S. Browne | — |
| 887 | E. de S. Browne | Miss M. Watson |
| 888 | W. J. Hamilton | Mrs. Hillyard |
| 889 | W. J. Hamilton | Miss Pope |

## NORTHERN CHAMPIONSHIPS

| | *Gentlemen's Singles* | *Ladies' Singles* |
|---|---|---|
| 1880 | R. T. Richardson | — |
| 1881 | R. T. Richardson | — |
| 1882 | R. T. Richardson | Miss M. Langrishe |
| 1883 | H. W. W. Wilberforce | Miss Coleridge |
| 1884 | D. Stewart | Miss E. Davies |
| 1885 | J. Dwight | Miss M. Watson |
| 1886 | H. Grove | Miss M. Watson |
| 1887 | H. Grove | Miss L. Dod |
| 1888 | W. J. Hamilton | Miss L. Dod |
| 1889 | W. J. Hamilton | Miss L. Dod |

| | *Gentlemen's Doubles* | *Ladies' Doubles* |
|---|---|---|
| 1880 | R. W. Braddell and J. Coomber | — |
| 1881 | R. W. Braddell and J. Coomber | — |
| 1882 | W. Renshaw and E. Renshaw | Miss Langrishe and Miss M. Langrishe |
| 1883 | W. Renshaw and E. Renshaw | Miss Coleridge and Miss R. Collier |
| 1884 | W. Renshaw and E. Renshaw | Miss E. Davies and Miss Eckersley |
| 1885 | W. Renshaw and E. Renshaw | Miss Dod and Miss L. Dod |
| 1886 | W. Renshaw and E. Renshaw | Miss Dod and Miss L. Dod |
| 1887 | D. G. Chaytor and T. S. Campion | Miss Dod and Miss L. Dod |
| 1888 | W. Renshaw and E. Renshaw | Miss Dod and Miss L. Dod |
| 1889 | G. W. Hillyard and H. S. Mahony | Miss M. Steedman and Miss Steedman |

## WEST OF ENGLAND CHAMPIONSHIPS

(*Played at Bath*)

| | *Gentlemen's Singles* | *Ladies' Singles* |
|---|---|---|
| 1881 | P. G. von Donop | Miss G. B. Gibbs |
| 1882 | G. M. Butterworth | Miss F. Morris |
| 1883 | E. de S. Browne | Miss M. Watson |
| 1884 | E. de S. Browne | Miss E. Davies |
| 1885 | E. de S. Browne | Miss G. B. Gibbs |
| 1886 | J. Dwight | Miss L. Dod |
| 1887 | H. Grove | Miss L. Dod |
| 1888 | H. S. Barlow | Miss L. Dod |
| 1889 | J. Baldwin | Miss L. Martin |

| | *Gentlemen's Doubles* | *Ladies' Doubles* |
|---|---|---|
| 1882 | P. G. von Donop and C. L. Sweet | Miss G. B. Gibbs and Miss Constable |
| 1883 | P. G. von Donop and G. M. Butterworth | Miss Watson and Miss M. Watson |
| 1884 | D. Stewart and W. J. B. Salmon | Miss E. Davies and Miss Mardall |
| 1885 | W. Renshaw and E. de S. Browne | Miss Gurney and Miss G. B. Gibbs |
| 1886 | W. Renshaw and E. de S. Browne | Miss Dod and Miss L. Dod |
| 1887 | W. Renshaw and E. de S. Browne | Miss Dod and Miss L. Dod |
| 1888 | W. Renshaw and E. de S. Browne | Miss Dod and Miss L. Dod |
| 1889 | J. Baldwin and H. S. Barlow | Miss L. Martin and Miss Stannell |

## PRINCE'S CHAMPIONSHIP

*Gentlemen's Singles*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1880 | H. F. Lawford | 1882 | E. Renshaw |
| 1881 | W. Renshaw | 1883 | H. F. Lawford |

## COVERED COURT CHAMPIONSHIP

(*Played at Hyde Park Club*)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1885 | H. F. Lawford | 1888 | E. W. Lewis |
| 1886 | E. L. Williams | 1889 | E. W. Lewis |
| 1887 | E. W. Lewis | 1890 | E. W. Lewis |

## SOUTH OF ENGLAND CHAMPIONSHIPS

(*Played at Eastbourne*)

| | *Gentlemen's Singles* | *Ladies' Singles* |
|---|---|---|
| 1881 | E. Lubbock | — |
| 1882 | W. C. Taylor | — |
| 1883 | E. L. Williams | — |
| 1884 | E. L. Williams | — |
| 1885 | E. W. Lewis | Miss Bingley |
| 1886 | E. W. Lewis | Miss Bracewell |
| 1887 | E. W. Lewis | Miss Bracewell |
| 1888 | A. G. Ziffo | Mrs. Hillyard (Miss Bingley) |
| 1889 | A. G. Ziffo | Miss M. Langrishe |

| | *Gentlemen's Doubles* |
|---|---|
| 1883 | C. W. Grinstead and E. L. Williams |
| 1884 | E. Renshaw and C. L. Sweet |
| 1885 | E. Renshaw and H. Grove |
| 1886 | H. W. W. Wilberforce and J. F. P. Rawlinson |
| 1887 | E. W. Lewis and H. Chipp |
| 1888 | E. W. Lewis and E. G. Meers |
| 1889 | E. Renshaw and H. S. Barlow |

## NORTH OF ENGLAND CHAMPIONSHIPS

(*Played at Scarborough*)

| | *Gentlemen's Singles* | *Ladies' Singles* |
|---|---|---|
| 1886 | E. de S. Browne | Miss Bracewell |
| 1887 | E. de S. Browne | Miss Bracewell |
| 1888 | H. Grove | Miss Bracewell |
| 1889 | P. B. Brown | Miss Gurney |

| | *Gentlemen's Doubles* | *Ladies' Doubles* |
|---|---|---|
| 1886 | E. de S. Browne and H. Grove | Miss Mardall and Miss Bracewell |
| 1887 | E. de S. Browne and H. Grove | Miss M. Steedman and Miss B. Steedman |
| 1888 | G. E. Brown and P. B. Brown | Miss Dod and Miss L. Dod |
| 1889 | G. E. Brown and P. B. Brown | Miss Wood and Miss Clark |

## CHAMPIONSHIPS OF LONDON

*(Played at the London Athletic Club)*

| | *Gentlemen's Singles* | *Ladies' Singles* |
|---|---|---|
| 1885 | C. H. A. Ross | Miss M. Watson |
| 1886 | E. W. Lewis | Miss Bingley |
| 1887 | E. W. Lewis | Miss Bingley |
| 1888 | E. W. Lewis | Mrs. Hillyard (Miss Bingley) |
| 1889 | H. S. Barlow | Miss Jacks |

## CHAMPIONSHIPS OF MIDDLESEX

*(Played at Chiswick Park)*

| | *Gentlemen's Singles* | *Ladies' Singles* |
|---|---|---|
| 1886 | H. Grove (Championship not instituted) | |
| 1887 | E. W. Lewis | Miss Patterson |
| 1888 | E. W. Lewis | Mrs. Hillyard |
| 1889 | E. W. Lewis | Miss M. Steedman |

*Gentlemen's Doubles*

1888 H. Chipp and E. W. Lewis.
1889 E. W. Lewis and G. W. Hillyard.

## CHELTENHAM

| | *Gentlemen's Singles* | *Ladies' Singles* |
|---|---|---|
| 1883 | D. Stewart | Miss M. Watson |
| 1884 | D. Stewart | Miss E. Davies |
| 1885 | E. de S. Browne | Miss M. Watson |
| 1886 | E. de S. Browne | Miss L. Martin |
| 1887 | E. de S. Browne | Miss L. Martin |
| 1888 | H. Grove | Miss L. Martin |
| 1889 | G. W. Hillyard | Miss L. Martin |

| | *Gentlemen's Doubles* | *Ladies' Doubles* |
|---|---|---|
| 1883 | G. M. Butterworth and W. J. B. Salmon | Miss Watson and Miss M. Watson |
| 1884 | Capt. Wood and C. L. Sweet | Miss Mardall and Miss E. Davies |
| 1885 | W. Renshaw and E. de S. Browne | Miss L. Martin and Miss Butler |
| 1886 | W. Renshaw and E. de S. Browne | Miss Bracewell and Miss Bingley |
| 1887 | Handicap doubles played | Miss Watson and Miss M. Watson |
| 1888 | | Handicap doubles played |
| 1889 | | |

## BUXTON

| | *Gentlemen's Singles* | *Ladies' Singles* |
|---|---|---|
| 1884 | C. W. Grinstead | Mrs. Watts |
| 1885 | E. Chatterton | Miss Bingley |
| 1886 | T. S. Campion | Miss Martin |
| 1887 | T. S. Campion | Miss M. Langrishe |
| 1888 | T. S. Campion | Mrs. Hillyard (Miss Bingley) |
| 1889 | P. B. Brown | Miss B. Steedman |

*Gentlemen's Doubles*

| | |
|---|---|
| 1884 | C. W. Grinstead and J. R. Deykin |
| 1885 | W. Renshaw and J. Dwight |
| 1886 | G. E. Brown and P. B. Brown |
| 1887 | T. S. Campion and W. D. Hamilton |
| 1888 | T. S. Campion and W. D. Hamilton / G. E. Brown and P. B. Brown } divided |
| 1889 | A. J. de C. Wilson and J. Baldwin |

## EXMOUTH

| | *Gentlemen's Singles* | *Ladies' Singles* |
|---|---|---|
| 1881 | E. D. Maconchy | Miss Cole |
| 1882 | C. L. Sweet | Miss Cole |
| 1883 | C. W. Grinstead | Miss M. Watson |
| 1884 | C. W. Grinstead | Miss M. Watson |
| 1885 | No meeting | No meeting |
| 1886 | H. Grove | Miss M. Watson |
| 1887 | H. Grove | Mrs. Hillyard |
| 1888 | E. W. Lewis | Mrs. Hillyard |
| 1889 | E. W. Lewis | Miss Hole |

## TENBY—SOUTH WALES CHALLENGE CUP

*Gentlemen's Singles*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1881 | L. G. Campbell | 1885 | W. S. N. Heard |
| 1882 | P. J. Ash | 1886 | W. S. N. Heard |
| 1883 | P. J. Ash | 1887 | W. S. N. Heard |
| 1884 | H. R. Lloyd | 1888 | W. S. N. Heard |

1889 — Lloyd

## OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE MATCHES

| | *Singles* | *Doubles* | | *Singles* | *Doubles* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1881 | Oxford | Oxford | 1886 | Cambridge | Cambridge |
| 1882 | Oxford | Oxford | 1887 | Oxford | Cambridge |
| 1883 | Oxford | Oxford | 1888 | Abandoned owing to weather | |
| 1884 | Cambridge | Cambridge | 1889 | Oxford | Cambridge |
| 1885 | Cambridge | Cambridge | | | |

## INTER-CLUB COMPETITION

1889 All England Club

## INTER-COUNTY COMPETITION

1889 Middlesex

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# II

## *THE LAWS OF LAWN TENNIS*

*Issued under the authority of the Lawn Tennis Association*

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### THE SINGLE-HANDED GAME

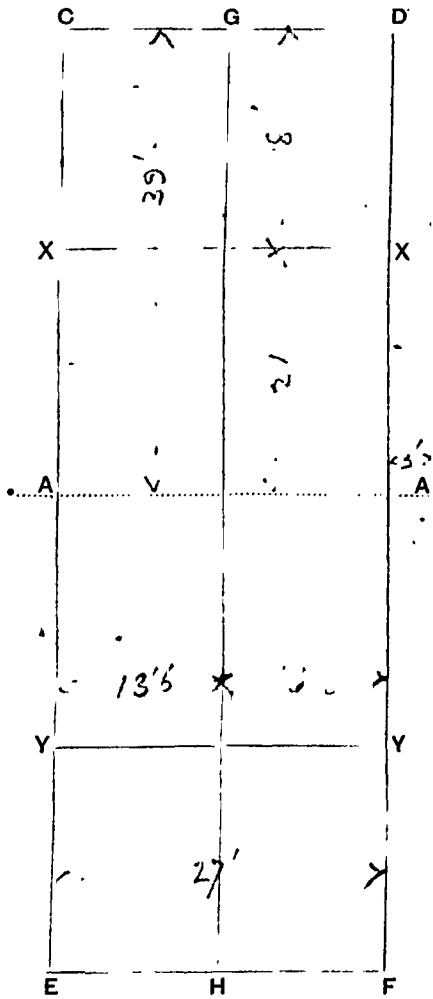
1. FOR the single-handed game, the court is 27 ft. in width and 78 ft. in length. It is divided across the middle by a net, the ends of which are attached to the tops of two posts, A and A, which stand 3 ft. outside the court on each side. The height of the net is 3 ft. 6 in. at the posts, and 3 ft. at the centre. At each end of the court, parallel with the net, and at a distance of 39 ft. from it, are drawn the *base-lines*, CD and EF, the extremities of which are connected by the *side-lines*, CE and DF. Half-way between the side-lines, and parallel with them, is drawn the *half-court-line*, GH, dividing the space on each side of the net into two equal parts, called the *right* and *left courts*. On each side of the net, at a distance of 21 ft. from it, and parallel with it, are drawn the *service-lines*, XX and YY.

2. The balls shall be not less than $2\frac{1}{2}$ in., nor more than $2\frac{5}{10}$ in. in diameter; and not less than $1\frac{7}{8}$ oz., nor more than 2 oz in weight.

3. In matches, where umpires are appointed, their decision shall be final; but, where a referee is appointed, an appeal shall lie to him from the decision of an umpire on a question of law.

4. The choice of sides and the right of serving during the first game shall be decided by toss; provided that, if the winner of the toss choose the

PLAN OF COURT




*Scale one-sixth inch to a yard.*

right to serve, the other player shall have the choice of sides, and *vice versâ*, and provided that the winner of the toss may, if he prefer it, require the other player to make the first choice.

5. The players shall stand on opposite sides of the net: the player who first delivers the ball shall be called the *server*, the other the *striker-out*.

6. At the end of the first game, the striker-out shall become server, and the server shall become striker-out; and so on alternately in the subsequent games of the set.

7. The server shall stand with one foot beyond (i.e. further from the net than) the base-line, and with the other foot upon the base-line, and shall deliver the service from the right and left courts alternately, beginning from the right.

8. The ball served must drop within the service-line, half-court-line, and side-line of the court, which is diagonally opposite to that from which it was served, or upon any such line.

9. It is a *fault* if the service be delivered from the wrong court, or if the server do not stand as directed in law 7, or if the ball served drop in the net or beyond the service-line, or if it drop out of court or in the wrong court: it is not a *fault* if the server's foot, which is beyond the base-line, do not touch the ground at the moment at which the service is delivered.

10. A fault may not be taken.

11. After a fault, the server shall serve again from the same court from which he served that fault, unless it was a fault because served from the wrong court.

12. A fault may not be claimed after the next service has been delivered.

13. The service may not be *volleyed*, i.e. taken before it touches the ground.

14. The server shall not serve until the striker-out is ready. If the latter attempt to return the service, he shall be deemed to be ready.

15. A ball is *in-play* from the moment at which it is delivered in service (unless a fault) until it has been volleyed by the striker-out in his first stroke, or has dropped in the net or out of court, or has touched either of the players or anything that he wears or carries, except his racket in the act of striking, or has been struck by either of the players with his racket more than once consecutively, or has been volleyed before it has passed over the net, or has failed to pass over the net before its first bound (except as provided in law 17), or has touched the ground twice consecutively on either side of the net, though the second time may have been out of court.

16. It is a *let* if the ball served touch the net, provided the service be otherwise good; or if a service or fault be delivered when the striker-out is not ready; or if either player be prevented by an accident beyond his control from serving or returning the ball in-play. In case of a let, the service or stroke counts for nothing, and the server shall serve again.

17. It is a good return although the ball touch the net, or, having passed outside either post, drop on or within any of the lines which bound the court into which it is returned.

18. The server wins a stroke, if the striker-out volley the service, or fail to return the service or the ball in-play (except in the case of a let), or return the service or ball in-play so that it drop outside any of the lines which bound the opponent's court, or otherwise lose a stroke, as provided by law 20.

19. The striker-out wins a stroke, if the server serve two consecutive faults, or fail to return the ball in-play (except in the case of a let), or return the ball in-play so that it drop outside any of the lines which bound his opponent's court, or otherwise lose a stroke, as provided by law 20.

20. Either player loses a stroke, if the ball in-play touch him or anything that he wears or carries, except his racket, in the act of striking; or if he touch or strike the ball in play with his racket more than once consecutively; or if he touch the net or any of its supports, while the ball is in-play; or if he volley the ball before it has passed the net.

21. On either player winning his first stroke, the score is called 15 for that player; on either player winning his second stroke, the score is called 30 for that player; on either player winning his third stroke, the score is called 40 for that player; and the fourth stroke won by either player is scored game for that player; except as below:—

If both players have won three strokes, the score is called deuce; and the next stroke won by either player is scored advantage to that player. If the same player win the next stroke, he wins the game; if he lose the next stroke, the score is again called deuce; and so on until either player win the two strokes immediately following the score of deuce, when the game is scored for that player.

22. The player who first wins six games wins a set; except as below:—

If both players win five games, the score is called games-all; and the next game won by either player is scored advantage-game for that player. If the same player win the next game, he wins the set; if he lose the next game, the score is again called games-all; and so on until either player win the two games immediately following the score of games-all, when he wins the set.

*Note.*—Players may agree not to play advantage-sets, but to decide the set by one game after arriving at the score of games-all.

23. The players shall change sides at the end of every set; but the umpire, on appeal from either party before the toss for choice, shall direct the players to change sides at the end of the first, third, and every subsequent alternate game of each set, provided that in such event the players shall not change sides at the end of a set if the number of games in such set be even; but, if the appeal be made after a match has been begun, the umpire shall only direct the players to change sides at the end of the first, third, and every subsequent alternate game of the odd and concluding set.

24. When a series of sets is played, the player who was server in the last game of one set shall be striker-out in the first game of the next.

## ODDS

25. In the case of received odds:

*a.* One-quarter of fifteen is one stroke given at the beginning of the second and every subsequent fourth game of a set.

*b.* Two-quarters of fifteen is one stroke given at the beginning of the second and every subsequent alternate game of a set.

*c.* Three-quarters of fifteen is one stroke given at the beginning of the second, third, fourth, and the three last of every subsequent four games of a set.

*d.* One-, two-, or three-quarters of fifteen may be given in augmentation of other odds.

*e.* Fifteen is one stroke given at the beginning of every game of a set.

*f.* Thirty is two strokes given at the beginning of every game of a set.

*g.* Forty is three strokes given at the beginning of every game of a set.

26. In the case of owed odds:

*a.* One-quarter of fifteen is one stroke owed at the beginning of the first and every subsequent fourth game of a set.

*b.* Two-quarters of fifteen is one stroke owed at the beginning of the first and every subsequent alternate game of a set.

*c.* Three-quarters of fifteen is one stroke owed at the beginning of the first, third, and fourth of the first four and every subsequent four games of a set.

*d.* Fifteen is one stroke owed at the beginning of every game of a set.

*e.* Thirty is two strokes owed at the beginning of every game of a set.

*f.* Forty is three strokes owed at the beginning of every game of a set.

## THE THREE-HANDED AND FOUR-HANDED GAMES

27. The above laws shall apply to the three-handed and four-handed games, except as below.

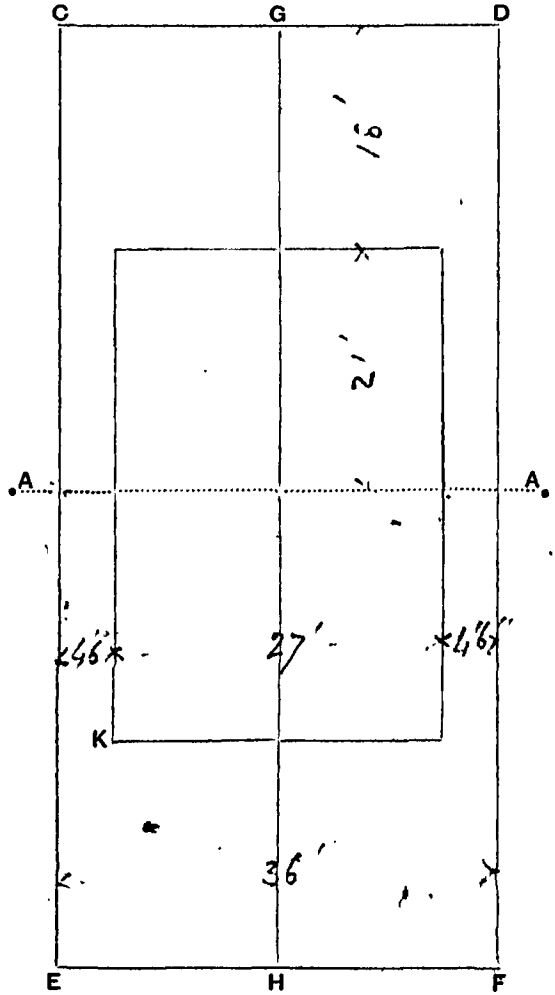
28. For the three-handed and four-handed games the court is 36 ft. in width. Within the side-lines at a distance of $4\frac{1}{3}$ ft. from them, and parallel with them, are drawn the service-side-lines, IK and LM. The service-lines are not drawn beyond the points I, L, K, and M, towards the side-lines. In other respects, the court is similar to that which is described in law 1.

29. In the three-handed game the single player shall serve in every alternate game.

30. In the four-handed game the pair who have the right to serve in the first game may decide which partner shall do so, and the opposing pair may decide similarly for the second game. The partner of the player who served in the first game shall serve in the third; and the partner of

the player who served in the second game shall serve in the fourth, and so on in the same order in all the subsequent games of a set.

PLAN OF COURT




*Scale one-sixth inch to a yard*

31. The players shall take the service alternately throughout each game; no player shall receive or return a service delivered to his partner; and the order of service and of striking-out once arranged shall not be

altered, nor shall the strikers-out change courts to receive the service, before the end of the set.

32. The ball served must drop within the service-line, half-court-line, and service-side-line of the court which is diagonally opposite to that from which it was served, or upon any such line.

33. It is a *fault* if the ball served do not drop as provided in law 32, or if it touch the server's partner or anything that he wears or carries.

34. If a player serve out of his turn, the umpire, as soon as the mistake is discovered by himself or by one of the players, shall direct the player to serve who ought to have served; but all strokes scored, and any fault served, before such discovery, shall be reckoned. If a game shall have been completed before such discovery, then the service in the next alternate game shall be delivered by the partner of the player who served out of his turn; and so on in regular rotation.

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## III

## *REGULATIONS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF LAWN-TENNIS PRIZE MEETINGS*

1. At prize meetings promoted by associations or clubs affiliated to the Lawn-Tennis Association, the laws of lawn tennis for the time being sanctioned by the Lawn-Tennis Association, and the regulations hereinafter contained, shall be observed.

2. All details connected with any prize meeting shall be settled by the committee of the club promoting the meeting, or by a committee specially constituted for the purpose, of whom two, or such larger number as the committee may determine, shall form a quorum.

3. A Circular shall be issued by the committee specifying the conditions of the competitions (see recommendation 5).

4. No cheques, orders for money, or cash payments in any form shall be given as prizes, and the amount actually paid for each prize shall in no case be below the advertised value of the same.

5. The committee shall elect a referee with power to appoint a substitute to be approved by them.

6. The referee, or such other member or members of the committee as may be selected for the purpose, shall have power to appoint umpires, and the referee shall decide any point of law which an umpire may profess himself unable to decide, or which may be referred to him on appeal from the decision of an umpire.

7. The referee shall, during the meeting, be *ex officio* a member of the committee.

8. The courts shall be allotted to the competitors, and the competitors

shall be called upon to play, by a member or members of the committee, to be selected for the purpose, and in case of disagreement the committee shall decide.

9. The committee shall help to keep order on the ground, and shall consult and decide upon any question arising out of the competition, if summoned for that purpose by the referee or by any two of their number; and they shall have power when so convened, the misconduct of a competitor having been reported to them by a member of the committee or an umpire, to disqualify the offender, and further to order him off the ground, should his misconduct appear to them to justify such action, but before such action shall be taken an opportunity of offering an explanation shall be afforded to the competitor whose misconduct has been reported to them.

10. It is the duty of an umpire:

*a.* To ascertain that the net is at the right height before the commencement of play, and to measure and adjust the net during play, if asked to do so, or if, in his opinion, its height has altered.

*b.* To call the faults (subject to regulation 11).

*c.* To call the strokes when won, or when he is asked to call them, and to record them on the umpire's scoring sheet.

*Example.*—The strokes are scored by means of pencil marks in the spaces beneath the word 'STROKES,' thus:

| Game | Initials of players | STROKES | Game won by |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | A B | I I I I | A B |
| | C D | I I | |
| 2 | C D | I I I I I I I | C D |
| | A B | I I I I I | |

The scoring-sheet shows that in the first game the score ran and would have been called, thus: '15—love, 30—love, 30—15, 40—15, 40—30, game (A B)'; in the second game, 'love—15, 15 all, 15—30, 30 all, 40—30, deuce, advantage (C D), deuce, advantage (A B), deuce, advantage (C D), game (C D).'

The score of the server should be called first.

In scoring handicap matches, the odds received should be marked by crosses on the right of the first perpendicular thick line before the commencement of each game, thus:

| Game | Initials of players | Strokes | Game won by |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | A B | + | |
| | C D | | |
| 2 | C D | | |
| | A B | + + | |
| 3 | A B | + | |
| | C D | | |
| 4 | C D | | |
| | A B | + + | |

Here A B is receiving 15 and two quarters of 15.

When odds are owed, they should be marked on the *left* of the first perpendicular thick line, before the commencement of each game, thus:

| Game | Initials of players | Strokes | Game won by |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | A B | 1 1 | |
| | C D | | |
| 2 | C D | | |
| | A B | 1 | |
| 3 | A B | 1 1 | |
| | C D | | |
| 4 | C D | | |
| | A B | 1 1 | |

and crossed off one by one when the player owing wins a stroke, thus:

| Game | Initials of players | Strokes | Game won by |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | A B | / / | |
| | C D | | |
| 2 | C D | | |
| | A B | / | |
| 3 | A B | / / | |
| | C D | | |
| 4 | C D | | |
| | A B | / / | |

Here A B owes 15 and three-quarters of 15.

*d.* To call the games and the sets at the end of each, or when asked to call them, and to record them on the umpire's scoring sheet.[1]

*e.* To direct the competitors to change sides, in accordance with law 23.

*f.* When appealed to, during a rest, whether a doubtful ball is 'in play' or not, to call 'Play it out,' and at the conclusion of the rest, to give his decision (subject to regulation 11) or direct the competitors to play the stroke again.

*g.* To decide all doubtful or disputed strokes, and all points of law subject to regulations 11 and 12).

*h.* In handicap matches to call the odds at the commencement of each set.

*i.* To sign the umpire's scoring sheets, and to deliver them at the conclusion of the match to such person as the committee may authorise to receive them;

[1] At the end of each game the games should be called with the name of the player who is in advance, thus, '2 games to 1, B wins,' or, 'B leads.' If the games are level the score should be called thus, '3 games all,' or as the case may be. At the end of each set the sets should be called in like manner.

Provided, that no omission of any of the foregoing duties on the part of an umpire shall of itself invalidate a game or match.

11. It is the duty of a line-umpire to call faults and to decide strokes relating to the line for which he is appointed umpire, and to such line only.

12. The decision of an umpire shall be final upon every question of fact, and no competitor may appeal from it; but, if an umpire be in doubt as to a point of law, or if a competitor appeal against his decision on such a point, the umpire shall submit it to the referee, whose decision shall be final.

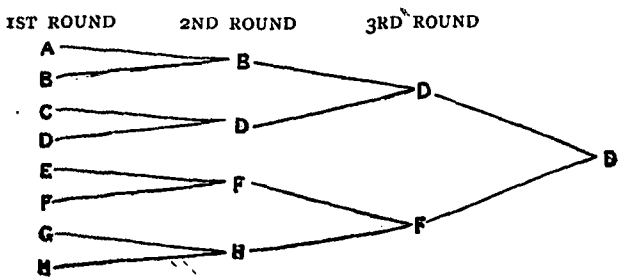
13. The referee shall not bet on a match, nor shall an umpire on a match in which he is acting, and if an objection for this or any other reason be made to a referee or umpire, either before or during a match, by a member of the committee or a competitor, the match, if begun, shall, if necessary, be at once stopped by the referee or two members of the committee, who shall take the opinion of the committee on the objection, and the committee shall have power to remove or suspend the referee or umpire so objected to; provided that the decision of the majority of the committee present shall be final, and that the referee or umpire so objected to (if a member of the committee) shall not be at liberty to vote on the question.

14. No competitor may transfer his entry to another player.

15. Competitors shall have a right, by themselves or deputies, to be present at the draw.

16. The draw shall be conducted in the following manner: each competitor's name shall be written on a separate card or paper, and these shall be placed in a bowl or hat, drawn out one by one at random, and copied on a list in the order in which they have been drawn.

17. When the number of competitors is 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, or any higher power of 2, they shall meet in pairs, in accordance with the system shown by the following diagram:

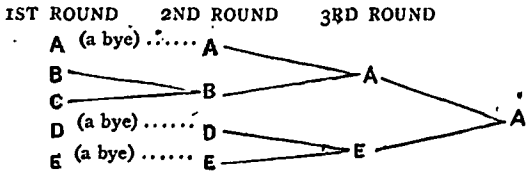



18. When the number of competitors is not a power of 2, there shall be byes in the first round. The number of byes shall be equal to the difference between the number of competitors and the next higher power of

2; and the number of pairs that shall meet in the first round shall be equal to the difference between the number of competitors and the next lower power of 2. The byes, if even in number, shall be divided, as the names are drawn, in equal proportions at the top and bottom of the list, above and below the pairs; if uneven in number, there shall be one more bye at the bottom than at the top. Thus, in

SERIES 1.—FROM 5 TO 8 COMPETITORS

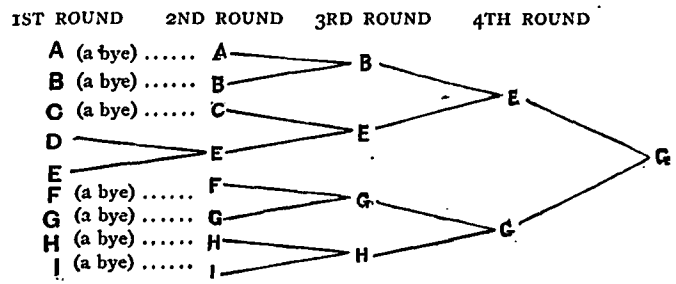
With 5, there will be 1 bye at the top, and 2 byes at the bottom of the list, thus:




With 6, there will be 1 bye at the top, and 1 bye at the bottom.
With 7, 1 bye at the bottom.
With 8, no byes.

SERIES 2.—FROM 9 TO 16 COMPETITORS

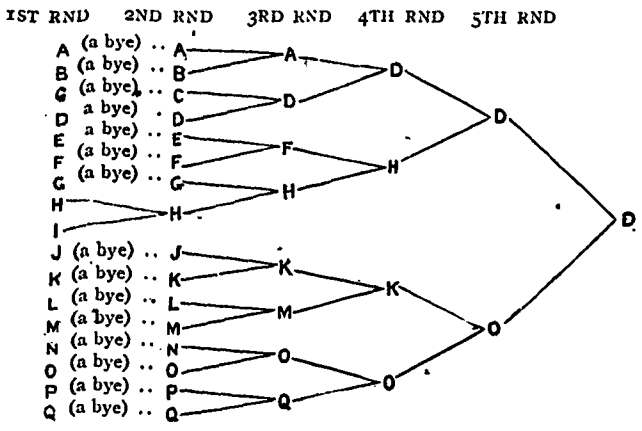
With 9, 3 byes at the top, and 4 byes at the bottom, thus:




With 10, 3 byes at the top, and 3 byes at the bottom.
With 11, 2 byes at the top, and 3 byes at the bottom.
With 12, 2 byes at the top, and 2 byes at the bottom.
With 13, 1 bye at the top, and 2 byes at the bottom.
With 14, 1 bye at the top, and 1 bye at the bottom.
With 15, 1 bye at the bottom.
With 16, no byes.

SERIES 3.—FROM 17 TO 32 COMPETITORS

With 17, 7 byes at the top, and 8 byes at the bottom, thus:




With 18, 7 byes at the top, and 7 byes at the bottom.
With 19, 6 byes at the top, and 7 byes at the bottom.
With 20, 6 byes at the top, and 6 byes at the bottom.
With 21, 5 byes at the top, and 6 byes at the bottom.
With 22, 5 byes at the top, and 5 byes at the bottom.
With 23, 4 byes at the top, and 5 byes at the bottom.
With 24, 4 byes at the top, and 4 byes at the bottom.
With 25, 3 byes at the top, and 4 byes at the bottom.
With 26, 3 byes at the top, and 3 byes at the bottom.
With 27, 2 byes at the top, and 3 byes at the bottom.
With 28, 2 byes at the top, and 2 byes at the bottom.
With 29, 1 bye at the top, and 2 byes at the bottom.
With 30, 1 bye at the top, and 1 bye at the bottom.
With 31, 1 bye at the bottom.
With 32, no byes.
And so on, with larger numbers, in like manner.

19. If a competitor be absent when called on to play, or shall refuse to play, or shall have given previous notice to the referee or a member of the committee that he cannot play in his next round, his adversary shall win in that round.

20. In handicap-matches, the competitors shall be handicapped by the committee, or by a handicapper appointed by the committee.

21. Unless any other principle of handicapping be adopted, the handicap shall be by classes, as below:—

CLASS 0 (scratch).

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Class | 1 | receives | one-quarter 15. |
| ,, | 2 | ,, | two-quarters 15. |
| ,, | 3 | ,, | three-quarters 15. |
| ,, | 4 | ,, | 15. |
| ,, | 5 | ,, | 15 and one-quarter 15. |
| ,, | 6 | ,, | 15 and two-quarters 15. |
| ,, | 7 | ,, | 15 and three-quarters 15. |
| ,, | 8 | ,, | 30. |
| ,, | 9 | ,, | 30 and one-quarter 15. |
| ,, | 10 | ,, | 30 and two-quarters 15. |
| ,, | 11 | ,, | 30 and three-quarters 15. |
| ,, | 12 | ,, | 40. |

When two players in different classes below scratch meet, the superior player shall start from scratch, and the odds received by the inferior player are as shown by the annexed table, No. I. To use the table, find in the diagonal line of figures the number representing the class of the superior player, then travel along the corresponding horizontal column until the vertical column is reached which bears at the top the number of the class of the inferior player. The odds specified at the intersection of the two columns are the odds required.

*Example.*—If Class 3 has to meet Class 9, start from the figure 3 in the diagonal line of figures, and look horizontally until the vertical column is reached headed by the figure 9. The odds given at the point of intersection of the two columns (viz. 15 and three-quarters 15) are the odds required.

When the difference between the best and worst players entered is great (say more than 30), it is desirable to handicap the best players at *owed odds*. The players above scratch (i.e. owing odds) should be classified as follows:—

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Class | 1 | owes | one-quarter 15. |
| ,, | 2 | ,, | two-quarters 15. |
| ,, | 3 | ,, | three-quarters 15. |
| ,, | 4 | ,, | 15. |
| ,, | 5 | ,, | 15 and one-quarter 15. |
| ,, | 6 | ,, | 15 and two-quarters 15. |
| ,, | 7 | ,, | 15 and three-quarters 15. |
| ,, | 8 | ,, | 30. |
| ,, | 9 | ,, | 30 and one-quarter 15. |
| ,, | 10 | ,, | 30 and two-quarters 15. |
| ,, | 11 | ,, | 30 and three-quarters 15. |
| ,, | 12 | ,, | 40. |

When two players in different classes above scratch meet, the inferior

player shall start from scratch, and the odds owed by the superior player are as shown by the annexed table, No. II.

This table is to be used in the same way as the former, the class of the superior player being looked for in the horizontal line of figures at the top, and the class of the inferior player in the diagonal line of figures.

*Example.*—If class 12 (owe 40) meet class 6 (owe 15 and two-quarters 15), the former must give the latter the odds of owe 15 and one-quarter 15.

22. In championship matches and handicaps by classes, as above, advantage sets shall be played throughout the ties.

23. The committee may, whether appealed to by any competitor or not, postpone the meeting or any match or part of the match if, in their opinion, the state of the weather, or of the light, or the condition of the ground renders it advisable to do so.

### Recommendations

1. There should be, if possible, a clear margin of at least 12 ft. on each side and 21 ft. at each end of the court; or, between adjacent courts, 18 ft. on each side; but, should the courts be placed end to end, or end to side, there should be spaces of 42 ft. or 33 ft. respectively, and a stop net at least 8 ft. high between.

2. Should the referee be a competitor, a substitute should be appointed to act for him while he is playing.

3. If two or more prizes be given, the loser in the final tie should receive the second prize, and where more than two prizes are given, the losers in the last tie but one should receive prizes of equal value.

4. In important matches it is desirable to have seven line-umpires in addition to the scoring umpire, namely, one for each base-line, one for each service-line, one for the half-court-line, and one for each side-line.

5. The circular issued by the committee should include the following particulars:

(1) The date, hour, and place of meeting;
(2) The events, entrance fees, and value of the prizes;
(3) The date, hour, and place of receiving and closing the entries;
(4) The time and place of the draw;
(5) The maker's name of the balls to be used at the meeting;
(6) The shoes to be worn, if there be any restriction in this respect;
(7) The number of sets to be played in the various matches, and whether advantage-sets or not.

6. In handicap competitions the handicap should, if possible, be named before the draw takes place.

## *REGULATIONS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF INTER-CLUB AND INTER-COUNTY MEETINGS*

1. The laws of lawn tennis for the time being sanctioned by the Lawn-Tennis Association, and Nos. 10, 11, and 12 of the foregoing regulations so far as applicable, shall be observed at all inter-club and inter-county meetings.

2. A referee shall be appointed by mutual agreement.

3. The balls used at all inter-club and inter-county meetings shall be selected by mutual agreement between the competing sides.

4. Provision for payment for the balls used at all inter-club and inter-county meetings shall be made by mutual agreement between the competing sides.

5. The hour for the cessation of play shall be fixed by mutual agreement before the commencement of play.

6. The number of single-handed or four-handed matches, or of both, to be played at each inter-club or inter-county meeting, shall be settled by mutual agreement between the competing sides.

7. All matches shall be the best of three advantage-sets.

8. The club or county which wins the greater number of matches shall be the winner at that meeting.

9. In case all the matches have not been played out by the time fixed for the cessation of play, or if play has been stopped by weather, the side having won the majority of matches shall be considered the winner; should the matches be equal, the majority of sets shall decide, and if matches and sets be equal, the majority of games.

10. The qualification to play for a county shall be birth in the county, or residence therein for at least two years immediately preceding, but no one shall be entitled to play for more than one county during the same year.

11. For the purposes of lawn tennis, the boundaries of counties shall be deemed to be unaffected by the Local Government Act, 1888.

12. During the two years that a player may be qualifying to play for a county under the residential qualification, he may play for the county for which he has last previously been playing under a like qualification.

13. The qualification to play for a district shall be birth, residence, or business occupation within the district.

14. The qualification to play for a club shall be *bonâ-fide* membership of that club.

15. These regulations shall be binding at all inter-club and inter-county meetings, and shall only be altered by mutual agreement between the competing sides.

## TABLE—NO I

*Showing the odds as between classes below scratch*

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| One quarter of fifteen | Two quarters of fifteen | Three quarters of fifteen | 15· | 15·1 | 15·2 | 15·3 | 30· | 30·1 | 30·2 | 30·3 | 40· |
| 1 | One quarter of fifteen | Two quarters of fifteen | Three quarters of fifteen | 15· | 15·1 | 15·2 | 15·3 | 30· | 30·2 | 30·3 | 40· |
| | 2 | One quarter of fifteen | Two quarters of fifteen | Three quarters of fifteen | 15· | 15·2 | 15·3 | 30· | 30·1 | 30·2 | 30·3 |
| | | 3 | One quarter of fifteen | Two quarters of fifteen | 15· | 15·1 | 15·2 | 15·3 | 30· | 30·2 | 30·3 |
| | | | 4 | One quarter of fifteen | Three quarters of fifteen | 15· | 15·1 | 15·2 | 30· | 30·1 | 30·2 |
| | | | | 5 | One quarter of fifteen | Three quarters of fifteen | 15· | 15·1 | 15·3 | 30· | 30·2 |
| | | | | | 6 | One quarter of fifteen | Three quarters of fifteen | 15· | 15·2 | 15·3 | 30·1 |
| | | | | | | 7 | Two quarters of fifteen | Three quarters of fifteen | 15·1 | 15·2 | 30· |
| | | | | | | | 8 | Two quarters of fifteen | 15· | 15·1 | 15·3 |
| | | | | | | | | 9 | Two quarters of fifteen | 15· | 15·2 |
| | | | | | | | | | 10 | Two quarters of fifteen | 15· |
| | | | | | | | | | | 11 | Two quarters of fifteen |

15·1 means 15 and one quarter 15, and so on.

## TABLE—NO. II

*Showing the owed odds as between classes above scratch*

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| One quarter of fifteen | Two quarters of fifteen | Three quarters of fifteen | 15· | 15·1 | 15·2 | 15·3 | 30· | 30·1 | 30·2 | 30·3 | 40· |
| 1 | One quarter of fifteen | Two quarters of fifteen | Three quarters of fifteen | 15· | 15·1 | 12·2 | 15·3 | 30· | 30·1 | 30·1 | 30·2 |
| | 2 | One quarter of fifteen | Two quarters of fifteen | Three quarters of fifteen | 15· | 15·1 | 15·1 | 15·2 | 15· | 30· | 30·1 |
| | | 3 | One quarter of fifteen | Two quarters of fifteen | Three quarters of fifteen | Three quarters of fifteen | 15· | 15·1 | 15·2 | 15·3 | 30· |
| | | | 4 | One quarter of fifteen | Two quarters of fifteen | Two quarters of fifteen | Three quarters of fifteen | 15· | 15·1 | 15·2 | 15·3 |
| | | | | 5 | One quarter of fifteen | Two quarters of fifteen | Two quarters of fifteen | Three quarters of fifteen | 15· | 15·1 | 15·2 |
| | | | | | 6 | One quarter of fifteen | Two quarters of fifteen | Two quarters of fifteen | Three quarters of fifteen | 15· | 15·1 |
| | | | | | | 7 | One quarter of fifteen | One quarter of fifteen | Two quarters of fifteen | Three quarters of fifteen | 15· |
| | | | | | | | 8 | One quarter of fifteen | One quarter of fifteen | Two quarters of fifteen | Three quarters of fifteen |
| | | | | | | | | 9 | One quarter of fifteen | One quarter of fifteen | Two quarters of fifteen |
| | | | | | | | | | 10 | One quarter of fifteen | One quarter of fifteen |
| | | | | | | | | | | 11 | One quarter of fifteen |

In using this table, supply throughout the word 'owe' before the odds specified.

# *RULES OF THE GAME OF FIVES*

The court is enclosed on three sides and open at the back.

The 'front' wall is the wall facing the player, and the 'right-hand' and 'left-hand' walls are the walls on his right hand and left hand respectively.

The 'step' is a shallow step dividing the court into two portions, an inner and an outer court.

The vertical face of the 'step' does not reckon as part of the floor of the court.

'On wall' and 'off wall' denote the floors of the inner and outer court respectively.

The 'pepper-box' is a buttress projecting from the left-hand wall. With the 'step' it encloses a small square portion of the floor called the 'hole.'

The 'line' is the ledge running across the front-wall at the height of 4 ft. 6 in.

A vertical line is marked on the front-wall at a distance of 3 ft. 8 in. from the right-hand wall.

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I. The ball must in every case be hit 'up,' i.e. it must be returned against the front-wall on or above the lower angle of the 'line.' Any ball except 'the service,' which drops on the top of any of the walls of the inner court, or which, after going 'up,' touches the ground first outside the court, or touches any object or person outside the court, *invariably* counts against the striker, and is called a 'good 'un.'

II. The ball must be fairly hit with a single blow of the hand or wrist, and must not touch any other part of the striker's person under the penalty of losing a stroke. It must not be caught or held in any way except to 'serve,' or to stop a 'blackguard' (see Rule 6), or to save a 'good 'un' (see Rule 13).

## POSITION OF THE PLAYERS

III. The game is usually played by four persons, two against two. Thus if A and B (with first innings) play C and D, A, who goes in first, stands upon the 'on wall' near the 'pepper-box'; B, his partner, on the

'off wall' near the right-hand outer corner; C stands near the middle of the 'off wall' ready to return the 'service,' and is said to be 'in holes'; and D, his partner, on the 'off wall,' near the left-hand outer corner.

## 'HOLES INNINGS.'

IV. In the first innings of a game, A (who goes in first) is said to have 'holes innings,' i.e. when both A and B have been put out, A will be 'in holes.' This rule only applies to the side which goes in first at the beginning of a game: afterwards partners take it in turns to be 'in holes.' If in the first game A has 'holes innings' and C is 'in holes,' then in the second game C has 'holes innings' and A is 'in holes,' in the third game B has 'holes innings' and D is 'in holes,' and in the fourth game D has 'holes innings' and B is 'in holes.'

## 'THE SERVICE.'

V. The ball when served must hit first the front-wall above the 'line,' and then the right-hand wall, and must fall on the 'off wall.' The player 'in holes' need not return the first or any 'service' till he gets one to his mind, and if he fails to return the 'service' above the 'line' no stroke is counted. Serving a 'good 'un' does not put a player out.

## THE 'FIRST CUT.'

VI. The player 'in holes' must not return the 'service' before the first bound. This return is called the 'first cut.' He must return it so that it should hit either (1) first the right-hand wall and then the front-wall above the 'line'; or (2) the front-wall above 'the line' between the right-hand side-wall and the vertical line marked on the front-wall. In both these cases the ball may afterwards hit any wall or walls, and may fall anywhere on the 'on wall' or 'off wall.' Only the player 'in holes' may return the 'service.' A 'first cut' which is 'up,' but not in accordance with these conditions, is called a 'blackguard.' The player 'in holes,' or his partner, may then touch or catch the ball before the first bound, and if this is done, no stroke is counted. If the ball is not touched or caught, it may be returned or not by either of the opposite players at their option, and if it is not returned above the 'line' no stroke is counted.

## 'THE BULLY.'

VII. After the 'service' and the 'first cut' the ball is returned alternately by either side. It may be returned by either of the partners before the first or before the second bound, and may or may not hit the side-walls. A 'bully' is lost to his side by the player who fails to return the ball above the 'line,' or hits a 'good 'un.'

## 'LETS.'

VIII. A 'let' may be claimed when a player is in any way prevented from returning or impeded in his attempt to return the ball by one of the opposite side. A stroke which would have hit the front-wall above the 'line,' but is prevented from doing so by one of the opposite side, counts as a 'let.' A 'let' cannot be claimed when a 'good 'un' is hit nor when a player is impeded by bystanders. In all cases of dispute the umpire's decision is final.

*Note.*—If there is no umpire, a claim is generally allowed.

IX. If a ball while being returned first strikes one of the opposite side and then the front-wall above the 'line' it counts as 'up'; if it first strikes one of the same side it counts against the striker, whether it goes 'up' or not.

X. If a ball returned by A or B strike A or B after going 'up' before the second bound, it may be returned or not by C or D at their option, and *vice versâ*. If not returned it counts as a 'let.' If returned above the 'line' no 'let' can be claimed.

## SCORING.

XI. The game consists of fifteen points. Only the 'in' side can score points. When A is put out B takes his place; when B is put out the side is out and their opponents go in, the player 'in holes' having first innings. The result of each bully (except in the case of a 'let') is either to add one to the score of the 'in' side, or to put one of them out, as the case may be.

## 'TWO OUT.'

XII. If C 'in holes' loses one point to the opposite side, he is said to be 'one out'; if he loses a second point, he is said to be 'two out,' and D takes his place, if D in his turn loses two points he is 'two out' and C is 'in holes' again, and so on till A and B are put out; provided that he who was 'two out' first is then the first to go in; but if, through inadvertence or otherwise, he does not do so, the error cannot be corrected after 'the service' has been returned. If the 'out' side lose a point by failing to return a ball out of the 'hole,' it does not count as 'one out' against the player 'in holes.'

*Note*—For the purposes of this Rule all balls which fall on the 'on wall' belong to the player 'in holes,' and also all balls falling on the 'off wall' which he attempts to return.

## 'SAVING GOOD 'UNS.'

XIII. If the player 'in holes' hit the 'first cut' in such a way that it will probably fall out of court and count as a 'good 'un,' he or his partner

may, if they can, prevent it from doing so, by touching or catching the ball before it falls, provided that the player touching it have one or both feet on the floor of the court, or, if he jumps for the purpose, alights on the floor of the court with the foot which first touches the ground. If the ball is caught no stroke is counted: if only touched, the opposite player may, if he pleases, return the ball as in Rule 19; if he fails to do so, no stroke is counted. This rule only applies to 'first cut.'

### 'BLACKGUARD CUT.'

XIV. When the side 'in' reaches 14 points, the following rules must be observed:—(1) The player serving must stand quite close to the 'pepper-box' with one foot on the 'on wall' and the other on the 'off wall,' and he may not place both feet on the 'on wall' until the player 'in holes' has hit the ball. If he forgets to stand thus and serves the ball with both feet on the 'on wall,' the player 'in holes,' or his partner, may try to be the first to touch the ball before it falls. If they succeed in this, the player serving is out. If the player serving or his partner touch the ball first, or if it hits the ground before being touched, it counts neither way. A player may remind his partner of this rule. (2) When the ball is properly served, the player 'in holes' may return the 'first cut' against any part of the front-wall above 'the line,' with or without hitting the side-walls, and it is therefore called 'blackguard cut.' Rule 6, except the first sentence, is suspended at this point of the game.

### 'SETTING.'

XV. If the players are '13 all,' the game, as in rackets, may at the option of the outside be 'set' to 5 or 3; if '14 all' to 3. Rule 14 must then be observed at 4 and 2 respectively.

### 'SINGLE WALL GAME.'

XVI. When the game is played by two players only, no ball counts unless it fall upon the 'on wall,' but a player may return a ball which falls on the 'off wall,' if he pleases, except the 'service.' Of the two players he who is 'in' stands on the right-hand side of the court, and he who is 'out' on the left-hand side. The 'service' must hit first the right-hand wall and then the front wall above the 'line.' The 'first cut' must hit either (1) first the left-hand wall and then the front-wall above the 'line,' or (2) first the front-wall above the 'line' and then the right-hand wall. Only so much of Rule 14 need be observed as applies to the 'out' player,

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